United Nations S/PV.5966

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5966th meeting

Tuesday, 26 August 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Costa Rica	Ms. Villalobos
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Mubarak
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Ms. Donova
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-49051 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Burundi, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nsanze (Burundi) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Her Excellency Ambassador Ulla Ström, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations.

It is so decided.

I invite Ambassador Ström to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing from the Chairman of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I give the floor to Ms. Ulla Ström, who will speak on behalf of Mr. Anders Lidén, Chairman of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Sweden.

Ms. Ström: As you said, Mr. President, I shall deliver a briefing on behalf of my Permanent Representative, who unfortunately is not here because he is attending the annual ambassadorial meeting in Stockholm. I shall now read out his statement.

"I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to participate in today's meeting on Burundi in my capacity as the Chair of the Burundi country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. As members know, Sweden recently assumed the chairmanship of the Burundi configuration. We very much welcome this opportunity to engage with the Security Council.

"Since the last Peacebuilding Commission briefing on Burundi to the Council, on 22 May 2008 (see S/PV.5897), there have been a number of positive developments, including the cessation of hostilities. At the same time, the peace process continues to face significant challenges, which require national stakeholders to show willingness to compromise and which illustrate the need for coordinated and robust additional support from regional actors and the international community.

"On 23 June, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government of Burundi undertook the first biannual review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding. Drawing on a comprehensive progress report, that landmark meeting resulted in concrete recommendations to all the relevant stakeholders on a number of issues, such as the implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Burundi and the PALIPEHUTU-Forces nationales de liberation (FNL), security, justice and the promotion of the rule of law, land reform, socio-economic recovery and the gender dimensions of peacebuilding.

"In the area of good governance, the biannual review focused on creating the conditions for free and fair elections in 2010. Those elections represent a milestone in the consolidation of democracy and peace in Burundi. The biannual review recommended that the revised draft legal framework for the elections reflecting Burundi's political reality should be presented to the National Assembly by December 2008. The Peacebuilding Commission also called on all political parties to promote

constructive dialogue, to adhere to the electoral code of conduct and to respect the democratic principles enshrined in the constitution. In that regard, we welcome the resumption of work at the level of the National Assembly.

"The review meeting also stressed that the establishment of the national independent electoral commission was essential for the preparations for the elections, and recommended that the commission should be operational by the first half of 2009. In that regard, I am happy to note the 18 June presidential decree establishing a permanent national independent electoral commission. I would also like to encourage the Government of Burundi to consider soliciting support from the international community, including the United Nations, in the preparation and conduct of the next elections.

"In the past few weeks, the Government of Burundi has demonstrated a commitment to follow up on those recommendations. The Peacebuilding Commission stands ready to provide continued support to the Government and all other stakeholders for the 2010 elections, including by supporting the development of a road map for their preparation.

"The biannual review meeting stressed the importance of the implementation of the 2006 Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL in accordance with the timeframes outlined in the revised programme of action to take forward the Burundi peace process. The return of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL leader, Mr. Agathon Rwasa, to Bujumbura, the signing of the Magaliesburg agreement on 11 June 2008 and the meeting between President Nkurunziza and Mr. Rwasa on 18 August are important steps forward in the peace process. That positive momentum must be seized upon, and every effort should be made to finalize the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement by the end of 2008, well in advance of the 2010 elections, in order to avoid the convergence of those two critical processes. The international community must continue to support the Regional Initiative, the South African Facilitation, the Political Directorate and the Group of Special Envoys for Burundi in their efforts to assist the Government and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL in implementing the Ceasefire Agreement.

"The successful implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement would constitute a vital step towards peace consolidation that would enable Burundi and its partners to focus on other critical challenges, including combating poverty, security sector reform, good governance, democratic consolidation and the fight against impunity. The Peacebuilding Commission will continue to support the Government of Burundi in mobilizing adequate resources to meet those challenges.

"Sweden, together with the other members of the Peacebuilding Commission Burundi configuration, will continue to build on the excellent initiatives undertaken by the previous Chair, Norway, under the untiring leadership of Ambassador Johan Løvald. We look forward to further interactions with the Security Council and other relevant actors, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, on the developments in Burundi. In preparation for the next biannual review of the Strategic Framework, we will continue to hold thematic meetings, including a planned meeting to discuss the preparations for the elections in 2010. I also hope to visit Burundi in the near future to gain first-hand perspectives and establish constructive working relations with the Government of Burundi and other key stakeholders.

"In conclusion, allow me to commend the Government and all the national stakeholders for their constructive engagement in the implementation of the Strategic Framework and the first biannual review meeting. Let me also use this occasion to thank the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) for assisting the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government of Burundi so ably in this regard. The integrated structure of BINUB and the strategic leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General will continue to be important for effective United Nations support for peacebuilding in Burundi."

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Ulla Ström for her briefing. I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Nsanze (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for having organized this informational meeting regarding my country. We would like to reiterate our gratitude to the Council for having selected Burundi as one of the first beneficiaries of the services of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has been operational since 2006 and whose overall encouraging mid-term report has just been presented to the Council by the representative of Sweden. We in Burundi have already begun to consider the assessment indicators for the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding, which take into account the recommendations made during the assessment meeting that took place on 23 June 2008.

My delegation would like to pay heartfelt tribute to Norway for the efforts of Mr. Johan Løvald, its former Permanent Representative to the United Nations, who carried out his duties in an outstanding manner. The results of his work are visible both here and in the field. He will be remembered by everyone who witnessed him work so methodically and with unwavering dedication.

I should also like to take this opportunity to warmly thank Sweden, which has graciously agreed to inherit responsibility from its sister country, Norway. That is a clear sign of friendship for my country, for which we are very grateful. We wish Sweden every success; we are prepared to work together to achieve results of which both our countries can be proud.

The assessment of the work under way for two years now in my country has shown us what has been accomplished on the road that we have travelled thus far, which has been short, and that which still lies ahead, which will be very long. However, since it is not customary to speak of conclusions with regard to national policy and economy, but rather to speak of progress achieved, which is easier, allow me to briefly sketch out the present situation for the Council, focusing on the implementation of the priority peacebuilding plan in my country.

In terms of good governance, which is a vast subject, and, more specifically, democratic governance, a great deal has been accomplished, with various ups and downs. Often, we had to hold our breath, particularly when institutions found themselves at a standstill. Today, parliament is functioning normally, and the Government is less divided. The party in power, the Conseil national pour la defense de la démocratie-Forces pour la defense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD), has been rebuilt. It has once again taken up its role as the unquestioned leader at the helm of the country. The opposition is playing its role as well, without, however, being able to endanger democratic institutions, as we have observed over the past few months.

I would even say that a great step has been taken. During the past week, a workshop was held on the framework for dialogue among the political parties. The workshop was held in Gitega, in the centre of the country, from 18 to 22 August. For the first time in our eventful journey of the past 15 years, a genuine and frank dialogue took place. The workshop involved the participation of 34 political parties, who freely gathered there. Participation in the workshop was active and enthusiastic. The participants requested that the framework become an ongoing framework for dialogue among the political parties. The workshop even proposed terms of reference in the event the framework for dialogue did in fact become permanent.

The political parties are together committing themselves to urgently deal with amendments for legal texts, the Constitution, the law on political parties, including the code of conduct, the electoral code, the law on communities and other laws that may be of interest to the citizens of Burundi. In addition, they intend to update the status of the opposition and even to review — and therefore re-write — the history of the country in order to make it inclusive of all citizens. To sum up, the workshop laid down the foundations for a harmonious vision of a future that can reassure citizens and also ensure that the elections of 2010 will take place in a climate of social and political tranquillity.

The major party missing at this forum was the Parti pour la libératon du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL), for obvious reasons: it has not yet been recognized as a political party. Allow me here to dwell for a moment on that case, which is of particular interest to us. As everyone is well aware, the leaders of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL returned to the country last May. The head of the movement, Agathon Rwasa, was one of the guests of honour as we celebrated the forty-sixth anniversary of national independence on 1 July 2008. The negotiations that began in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, continued in South Africa. Faithful to his commitment, President Pierre Nkurunziza, on 18 August 2008,

received the leader of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL movement. The mediator, Charles Nqakula, and his deputy, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, were involved in the discussion. It was agreed that the President of the Republic would meet the leader of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL whenever necessary, so that all issues would be resolved through dialogue. All of the parties to mediation will be involved at each meeting, so that appropriate responses can be found to all issues.

To step up the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, the President of the Republic, Pierre Nkurunziza, signed on that same day decree number 100/134 of 18 August 2008, providing legal status for the dissidents of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL movement who deserted after the signing of the ceasefire on 7 September 2006. That means that the issue of those fighters who left before the FNL was at the negotiating table and who are now regrouped at the sites of Randa and Bulumata, a total of 3,321 individuals, will not be treated any differently from the issue of the other fighters, who are currently being regrouped, since they are all members of the same movement, even if there has been discord among them.

In order to continue the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, the President of the Republic signed decree number 100/136 of 19 August 2008, creating a technical commission for the verification of the status of combatant for those dissidents who have left the PALIPEHUTU-FNL movement of Randa and Burumata. That commission is an ad hoc technical team that will be working under the supervision of the National Commission for Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration. The mandate of the technical team lasts 12 weeks, starting from the date of the entry into force of the decree. That means that, three months from now, the operation will come to an end.

Of course, following that, the status of combatant will be verified for those troops that remained faithful to Agathon Rwasa, who are currently being regrouped. At present, there are 2,300 such fighters, who have been regrouped, but we note that the movement is still in the process of recruiting, in violation of the ceasefire agreement, doubtless to achieve the exaggerated figures that were announced at its inception.

Moreover, there are issues of a political nature that are still outstanding. The PALIPEHUTU-FNL is continuing to refuse to change its name, although the constitution, in articles 77 and 78, forbids any political entity with ethnic connotations. Article 77 states that:

> "A political party consists of a non-profit association of citizens involved in a project for a democratic society based on national unity, with a specific political programme and with specific objectives, which meet the concern of serving the general interest and providing for the prosperity of all citizens."

Article 78 states that:

> "Political parties, in their organization and functioning, must act in accordance with democratic principles. They must be open to all citizens of Burundi and their national character must also be reflected in their leadership. They may not advocate violence, exclusion or hate in any form whatsoever, in particular on the basis of ethnic, regional, religious or gender affiliation."

We also note that other branches of the original PALIPEHUTU long ago agreed to call themselves by different names, including Parti Libérateur du Peuple Burundais and Forces nationales de libération-Icanzo. In addition, PALIPEHUTU-FNL is demanding that power be shared on a 50-50 basis, which is completely unrealistic. Here too, negotiations must be conducted in strict compliance with the constitution.

In any case, the delays observed in the cantonment of combatants and the demands made in the political negotiations must be monitored to prevent further delays with respect to the programme of action adopted on 23 February 2008 at Cape Town, South Africa, which sets 31 December 2008 as the deadline for integrating the PALIPEHUTU-FNL into State institutions.

Therefore, it is important to stress once again that, more than ever before, Burundi needs the international community's support and understanding. First of all, we need understanding because solutions to problems of a political and military nature are not always found overnight. There are stages that must be gone through, lest we find ourselves putting the cart before the horse, which can only lead to other problems. The President of the Republic and his Government are doing everything possible to ensure that the negotiations with the PALIPEHUTU-FNL succeed, but they require the international community's support so that the PALIPEHUTU-FNL does not

continue to engage in polemics or set traps at a time when the population as a whole aspires to peace and development.

The second track of the strategic peacebuilding plan concerns strengthening the rule of law within the security forces. To quote from the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi,

> "Although there have been important gains in the improvement of security, more particularly through the reorganization of the [army] and ... the Police together with the demobilization of over 20,000 combatants, these results alone are not enough in a situation where ... ex-combatants need to be reintegrated permanently in society and weapons and feelings of insecurity are widespread in society ...
>
> "... [T]he security forces ... are not always perceived as acting in the best interest of the population". (*PBC/1/BDI/4, annex, paras. 26-27)*

Since the Strategic Framework was drafted, some progress has certainly been made, but new problems have also emerged. At that time, demobilization did not yet involve PALIPEHUTU-FNL combatants. Today, demobilization of those combatants is imperative, while the demobilization of former members of the Burundian armed forces and former combatants of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie has not yet been completed.

Moreover, those who are already demobilized represent a potential insecurity factor, because they are having difficulties reintegrating into society with the scant resources provided to them. The Government continues to proclaim loud and clear that the demobilized will be a time bomb as long as their living standards have not been improved.

The World Bank recently highlighted the extreme poverty in which disabled demobilized persons waiting for housing to be built for them are languishing. It expects a new demobilization action plan from the Government by next month to that it can readjust its contribution. However, as noted earlier, demobilization is one thing and reintegration into society is another. Thus, Burundi needs support in this area from its bilateral and multilateral partners, because the demobilization process will be beneficial only if it is completed.

I shall now discuss the strengthening of justice, the promotion of human rights, national reconciliation and the fight against impunity. Here, the principal problems are strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Justice, ensuring the functioning of effective transitional justice, establishing an independent human rights commission and launching a truth and reconciliation commission. In all those areas, certain donors have already been active, including the Peacebuilding Fund. But the needs remain great, so other donors must be considered if we wish to see those projects completed.

Another urgent task is managing the land issue. The traditional Burundian land ownership system seems to have reached its limits. The pressure on the land is such that more than 80 per cent of the cases before the courts are linked to land disputes. The settling of scores is rife and is the root cause of a growing crime rate. A reform of the land code is planned, but its implementation will require funds that the Government cannot collect on its own.

In conclusion, we can state that the Government and the people of Burundi are making remarkable efforts that deserve to be supported. One need only travel around the country to see the primary and secondary school buildings under construction, not to mention other initiatives such as the reforestation of denuded mountains. In the area of public sector management, some progress has been made, so that the country has reached a decisive turning point. The World Bank has just decided to suspend 92 per cent of the country's debt, but that is not enough. The country needs solid budgetary support and substantial assistance so that reconstruction and development do not remain mere words.

Thus, we call on Burundi's development partners, in particular those that made pledges during the May 2006 round table, to honour their commitments. To date, just 30 per cent of the funds promised have been disbursed, and only within the framework of peacebuilding. However, the funds pledged for the financing of the socio-economic recovery are still not forthcoming.

We are most grateful to the United Nations, which, through the Peacebuilding Fund, is supporting 17 projects in the country, and we encourage the United Nations to finance other ones as well. We are

also grateful for the assistance that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have promised us.

We thank all those bilateral and multilateral partners who have shown us their understanding and assisted us. We are asking them to do even more, so that our people can benefit from the dividends of peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussions on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5967

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5967th meeting

Wednesday, 27 August 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 21 August 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/568)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-49182 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 21 August 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/568)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Lebanon and Israel, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Salam (Lebanon) and Mr. Carmon (Israel) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/583, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, Croatia, France, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Members also have before them document S/2008/425, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), and document S/2008/568, containing the text of a letter dated 21 August 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1832 (2008).

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Carmon (Israel): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your able stewardship of the Council during the month of August. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and the relevant Member States for their involvement and engagement and for their continuing commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). I would also like to express appreciation to the troop-contributing countries, the Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Strategic Cell in New York and the troops on the ground. Israel appreciates the difficulty of their task and values their dedication. They have been fulfilling their mission serving the values of peacekeeping, which has been characterized by growing complexity and challenges, especially over the past year.

Israel welcomes the extension of UNIFIL's mandate for another year. UNIFIL plays an important role in south Lebanon, with the main task of assisting in the establishment, between the Blue Line and the Litani River, of an area free of all armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL.

It has been more than two years since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), and the situation in Lebanon appears to be one of ongoing concern. Today, more than ever before, we are witnessing challenges to UNIFIL's activities and mandate. The presence and massive redeployment of armed Hizbullah elements and their acquisition of capabilities both north and south of the Litani River, along with the continuous transfer of weapons from Iran and Syria to Hizbullah, are blatant violations of resolution 1701 (2006) and

other relevant Security Council resolutions. In that context, let me refer members to the first report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT), which speaks for itself. I am confident that LIBAT's second report, which is expected shortly, will only strengthen the findings of its predecessor.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2008/425) highlights the challenges faced by UNIFIL. The report clearly identifies several incidents in which hostile groups equipped with unauthorized arms observed and monitored UNIFIL's activities and impeded its freedom of movement. Those incidents, which are only part of a larger phenomenon, not only represent ongoing violations of resolution 1701 (2006), but also constitute a danger to the stability in our region. In that regard, they also pose a threat to the safety of UNIFIL's personnel.

In that light, Israel expects UNIFIL, under its renewed mandate, to exert its authority to take all necessary action in areas where its forces are deployed, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind and to resist attempts to prevent it from discharging its mandate. As we all see, that is indeed a great challenge.

The new policy guidelines of the Lebanese Government further complicate, inter alia, the efforts of UNIFIL to fulfil its mandate. That development contradicts the core elements of resolution 1701 (2006). Further, it raises concerns as to the commitment of the Lebanese Government to extend, under resolution 1701 (2006), its authority over all of its territory through its own legitimate armed forces so that there will be no weapons present without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon. Instead of encouraging one of the main elements of resolution 1701 (2006) — the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon — the new guidelines, in effect, support Hizbullah's actions. That should be of major concern to all.

Let me stress once again Israel's appreciation to the international community for its continued engagement through the present resolution and for the work of UNIFIL. Israel attributes great importance to the cooperation between UNIFIL and the concerned parties, including the cooperation carried out through the tripartite meetings. For its part, Israel remains committed to cooperating with the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNIFIL on the ground in the fulfilment of resolution 1701 (2006), other relevant Security Council resolutions regarding Lebanon and this important resolution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I would also like to recognize your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, for his effective stewardship of the Council last month.

First and foremost, my Government would like to thank, through you, Mr. President, all members of the Council for the decision taken today to renew for another year the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). I am sure you are aware how important today's Council decision is to my fellow Lebanese citizens, who have been the victims of repeated Israeli aggressions since the 1978 invasion, which led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and to the creation of the first UNIFIL. We would also like to take this opportunity to commend UNIFIL for its remarkable work; to praise the wise and courageous leadership of its Commander, General Graziano; and to thank all troop-contributing countries and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In two days' time, it will be the second anniversary of the adoption of Council resolution 1701 (2006). During those two years, the Lebanese Government has reaffirmed time and again its commitment to the full implementation of the resolution in its entirety and to working closely with UNIFIL in pursuit of security and stability in its area of operations. What greater evidence of the seriousness of that commitment could there be than the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south promptly after the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006)? Let me also mention the appreciation of my Government for the technical support provided by the two Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT) missions and assure the Council that it will continue to give due consideration to the LIBAT reports.

We need to acknowledge the fact that resolution 1701 (2006), two years after its adoption, has not been fully implemented. What else can we conclude when Israel continues to violate Lebanese airspace on a daily basis, as stated by the Secretary-General in his seventh report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2008/425); when Israel persists in its refusal to hand over to the United Nations the maps of the deadly cluster bombs it has planted in the fields and farms of southern Lebanon; when Israel does not withdraw from the northern part of Al-Ghajar village; and when a solution to the Shabaa Farms issue, as proposed by the Lebanese Government in its seven-point plan, has not yet been reached?

Accordingly, can there still be any doubt about the identity of the party that must be held responsible for obstructing the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Indeed, res ipsa loquitur — the thing speaks for itself, says the legal adage.

Moreover, it is surprising that Mr. Ehud Barak, Defence Minister of Israel, continues to refuse to meet General Graziano, the Commander of UNIFIL, to discuss the situation on the Lebanese border and the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). "I've been asking for a meeting with Barak for six months, but they keep putting me off", Graziano is reported to have said, according to the Israeli daily *Haaretz*. On 22 August 2008, *Haaretz* also reported that Graziano has been complaining that he has not been able to meet Israeli Chief-of-Staff Ashkenazi either.

More disturbing, however, is the fact that Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Olmert, have recently been launching a series of alarming threats against Lebanon under various pretexts and allegations. This prompted our Prime Minister, Mr. Fuad Siniora, to write to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 22 August, warning that the current ongoing violations by Israel of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), coupled with recurring statements containing the threat of the use of force and coercion against Lebanon, raised serious concerns about Israeli intentions.

Mr. Siniora urged him to address firmly Israel's defiance of its obligations to fully abide by the letter and spirit of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

Against this background, I am confident that the Council will understand why I would like to thank it for the important resolution adopted today. It carries an unequivocal and renewed commitment to the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of my country.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5968

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5968th meeting

Wednesday, 27 August 2008, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507)

Letter dated 4 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/528)

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08-49188 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Guatemala, Iceland, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Tonga and Uruguay, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

It is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2008/528, containing a letter dated 4 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2008/418, containing a letter dated 20 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I welcome the participation of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, at this meeting and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Council on such an important subject. I welcome this open debate on implementation of measures intended to make the Council more efficient and transparent, and I am grateful to you, Mr. President, for bringing us together. Let me also express my appreciation for the tireless efforts of the delegations of Japan, Slovakia and Panama, as successive Chairs of the Council's revitalized Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Over the past years, the Security Council has faced increasingly complex responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time, we have experienced a surge in the demand for United Nations conflict prevention and management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

This makes it essential for the Council to keep addressing issues related to its working methods, including by implementing the measures set out in the note of the President of the Council two years ago. These measures are a key step in making the United Nations more efficient, effective and accountable in the face of a growing array of new challenges.

I commend the Council for its efforts so far. Consider what progress has been made in implementing the measures since the adoption of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) in July 2006. The Secretariat has also taken steps to make the recommendations in the note a reality, including those related to the timeliness and content of my reports to the Council, those on the familiarization of duly elected Council members, and the main technical points regarding wider and more user-friendly dissemination of information on the Council's programme and activities to non-Council members.

Since taking office, I have stressed the importance of full accountability as a fundamental organizing principle and operational guideline for the

work of the Organization. As a Secretariat, we must ensure that we work and deliver as one to meet the mandates that the Security Council gives us and, at the same time, hold ourselves accountable for our behaviour and for outcomes. I am confident that the Security Council, which carries out its responsibilities on behalf of all Member States, is also guided by this principle. I appreciate that the members of the Council are committed to interacting with the wider United Nations membership through greater transparency, openness in decision-making and inclusiveness. I consider this to be pivotal to the way the Council works and is perceived by the international community.

Since 1994, when the Security Council held its first debate on this issue, it has come a long way. I trust that the Council will consolidate the gains that have been made and keep moving forward. I look forward to working with the Council in strengthening even further the cooperation between it and the Secretariat. I shall keep extending my full support to the Security Council and its members for their tireless efforts to make this indispensable organ more efficient, transparent and inclusive.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): As a country that has consistently advocated reform of the working methods of the Security Council, Indonesia naturally strongly supports the convening of the present debate. We welcome, in particular, its open nature, as the Council can thereby benefit from the views of the wider membership of the United Nations.

We appreciate very much the important statement made by the Secretary-General reflecting the importance he attaches to the subject we are considering today.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement to be delivered later today by the representative of Cuba, on behalf on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

My delegation attaches great weight to the measures identified in the note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2006/507 (19 July 2006). It is our belief that a systematic and concerted application of such measures would indeed help promote the Council's transparency, interaction with non-Council members and efficiency. My delegation is therefore encouraged to note that the two years since the note's issuance have seen some progress in its implementation.

While welcoming this development, Indonesia can also see room for further progress. It is our conviction that the objectives of greater transparency, interaction with non-Council members and efficiency are compatible. Indeed, they are quite inseparable from efforts to further enhance the legitimacy of the Council's decisions and their effectiveness.

Transparency has recently been enhanced. Monthly programmes of work and forecasts have been made available. The United Nations Journal announces both formal and informal consultations of the Council and, to a certain degree, the meetings of the subsidiary organs. Not least, we have seen efforts to give renewed impetus to open meetings.

However, not infrequently, the monthly programme of work and forecast of the Council bears little resemblance to the actual work of the Council in a given month. Unforeseen crises invariably seize the Council's attention. Meetings, including formal and informal consultations, are convened at short notice. It is incumbent that the Council recognizes that this way of working is increasingly becoming the norm, rather than the exception. Thus, it would be appropriate for the Council to further develop an information dissemination system that responds to the dynamism of a fast evolving situation and yet is comprehensive and inclusive in its reach, in order to ensure that the wider membership of the United Nations is informed in a timely and accurate manner of the Council's activities.

We welcome the increased resort to open, formal meetings as another facet of transparency. In order to increase transparency, especially at an early stage of consideration of an issue, the Council should strive for open meetings. Indeed, unless there are strong, irrefutable arguments to the contrary, we believe that

reports by the Secretary-General, already published and available to Member States, should be presented and considered at open meetings of the Security Council. It would be to the Council's advantage to hear the views of interested Member States at that stage as well. Consideration of any follow-up action by the Council may take place at its subsequent informal consultations.

Nevertheless, care needs to be exercised in evaluating the actual significance of the reported increased resort to formal meetings. We must ensure, for example, that the potential contributions of such formal meetings are fully harvested. The views of the wider membership deserve full consideration. However, not infrequently, presidential statements are issued immediately after open debates and resolutions are adopted before the views of the concerned countries are fully heard. The Council should allow sufficient time to incorporate the valuable inputs from concerned Member States.

Also, we must be cognizant of the possibility that, as resort to formal meetings becomes more common, there may be a tendency for substantive consideration of Council decisions to take place outside of formal meetings, and even outside of consultations of the whole, through such processes as the "groups of friends".

The latter brings us to the question of greater interaction with non-Council members. We support the efforts of the Council to consult with the wider membership of the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders, particularly when drafting resolutions, presidential statements and press statements. We believe such interaction has the potential not only to enhance the quality of the Council's decisions, but also to engender an equally important sense of common ownership in them, thereby strengthening the prospects for their effective implementation.

As a country that strongly espouses greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, Indonesia naturally attaches particular importance to the ways and means that might facilitate interaction between them. In line with resolution 1631 (2005) and the World Summit Outcome document, the Security Council has on some occasions conducted enhanced consultations and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, as well as the Group of 77 and China, the NAM and other groupings, to speak on specific subjects in its open debates.

Investment in such interaction would help enhance the wealth of information, insights and the spectrum of perspectives that guide the Council's deliberation and decisions and also promote synergy between the Council's efforts and those of regional organizations. Of particular significance is the promotion of interaction between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries (TCCs), not only in the drawing up of mandates, but also in their implementation and when the situation on the ground demands it.

In short, more interaction between the Council and the wider membership of the United Nations should be promoted. A footnote, however, may be needed. It is important that such interaction be inclusive, involving each member of the Council, consistent in its application, reflecting the Council's readiness to engage with parties that may make contributions to its decision-making, and transparent. Taken to the extreme, we are concerned by situations in which discussions on draft resolutions and statements are carried out outside the Council proper, leaving less than optimal opportunities for deliberation on them within the Council.

No doubt, we are all for the promotion of efficiency in the Council's working methods. In that connection, Indonesia wishes to acknowledge the important steps the Secretariat has taken in carrying out several of the recommendations identified in the note by the President contained in document S/2006/507. I should now like to share some concluding thoughts.

Form follows function. We believe that in considering the various facets of the Council's working methods, including the possible format of Council meetings, it is important that we not lose sight of the underlying objectives or aims of the activity in question. With regard to consolidation and further progress, we believe that it is important that the progress already made in the implementation of the note by the President be consolidated and that renewed and concerted efforts be made where progress is yet to be made.

As a matter of principle, Indonesia shall consistently place a premium on working methods that promote transparency and greater interaction between

the Council and the wider membership. Not least, we shall consistently place a premium on working methods that offer the best chance for the Council to speak with a common voice in carrying out its Charter-mandated responsibilities. It is imperative that the Council be transparent as well as equitable and just in its approach to all threats and disputes that imperil international peace and stability. We seek a Council that safeguards the interests of all and whose decisions and actions are in full consonance with the established principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Li Kexin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his statement. I also wish to thank the Secretariat for its strong support for the day-to-day work of the Security Council. We would also like to thank Costa Rica and the other members of the group of five small nations for their initiative in convening this meeting.

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the members of the Security Council act on behalf of all Member States in shouldering the noble mission of maintaining international peace and security. Successfully carrying out that task depends upon the political will of Member States and, to a certain extent, on whether the Council has in place a set of working methods that are scientific, reasonable and effective. An ancient Chinese saying illustrates that same idea: in order to do a good job, a craftsman must first sharpen his tools. With regard to the Security Council, working methods that are reasonable and applicable constitute an indispensable tool in accomplishing our mission.

Profound changes are taking place in the international situation. The agenda and practices of the Security Council have also been adjusted from time to time. The Council's workload has increased drastically. The Security Council faces many new situations and problems. In order to better carry out its duties and increase its ability to confront various challenges to international peace and security, the Council must learn from its experience, keep up with the times and adopt more scientific and advanced working methods. This is not only a concern for the members of the Council, but also for the overall membership.

With regard to improving the working methods of the Security Council, in recent years the Council has undertaken many useful efforts. The note by the President contained in document S/2006/507 reflected the positive will and determination of the Council to increase its effectiveness and transparency. There has also been an increase in recent years in the number of public meetings. Coordination with troop-contributing countries has also been strengthened. In the course of taking decisions, the members of the Council are trying their best to consider and adopt the reasonable opinions of various parties.

Generally speaking, the Security Council has made progress in enhancing its transparency, increasing its interaction with non-members of the Council and strengthening its effectiveness. However, this is no time for complacency. We must recognize that both the general membership of the United Nations and civil society have greater expectations as regards the Council and its working methods. Improving working methods is a long-term endeavour that should always be part of the Council's agenda and should be given priority consideration. Improving working methods is also an incremental undertaking. We must safeguard what we have achieved, maintain the momentum and continue to make progress. Improving working methods should also be a results-oriented undertaking that closely integrates debate on related issues and includes concrete measures.

China supports the Security Council's improvement of its working methods. We would like to thank the delegation of Belgium for the concept paper (S/2008/528) it has prepared for this open debate, with whose relevant analysis we agree. I should now like to make a few comments.

First, with regard to enhancing transparency, China supports the Security Council's holding of more open meetings. However, we believe that it is necessary for us to improve how public meetings are conducted. We should avoid reducing such meetings to lengthy and pro forma exercises. The interactive nature of public meetings should also be strengthened. The President of the Security Council or his or her designate should, in a timely, comprehensive and accurate manner, brief non-members of the Security Council about its work.

Secondly, with regard to increasing communication with non-members of the Security Council, China has always believed that the Council should do its best to listen to the opinions of all parties

in addressing concrete issues, especially the parties to the issue and the countries of the region concerned. During meetings with troop-contributing countries, those countries should be encouraged to provide input. We also encourage the members of the Security Council to strengthen informal communications with non-members of the Council. The format used by the Council to carry out informal dialogues with organizations such as the African Union should also be further exploited. At the same time, the Council should also step up its exchanges and sharing of information with other United Nations bodies, especially the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Thirdly, with regard to increasing its effectiveness given the drastic growth in the number of items on the Security Council's agenda, the Council should concentrate on priorities and focus its attention on the most urgent issues. When placing new items on its agenda, the Council should adopt a responsible and cautious attitude. We agree on the need for a review of the current items on the agenda, in order to save resources and enhance efficiency. We are also concerned about the excessive attention given to theoretical issues. In addition, during consultations, full consideration should be given to the technical difficulties faced by Member States. Draft texts should also be circulated to all members as soon as possible, in order that countries may have enough time to consult their capitals.

Improving the Council's working methods is going to pose a daunting challenge for its work. Fortunately, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions is playing a positive role by continuously considering and debating this issue. China encourages the Working Group to maintain enthusiasm for its work and to put forward useful suggestions on enhancing transparency and efficiency, as well as to carry out its work in a dynamic way in order to achieve tangible results. It is our hope that, with the common efforts of all members, positive changes can take place continuously in the work of the Council.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome the presence of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, among us, and thank him for his statement. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and, through you, the group of five small countries, for choosing the timing of this debate and its subject. At the outset, we would like to align ourselves with the statement to be made later by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This is the first time since 1994 that we have held an open debate on the reform of the working methods of the Council. Such a reform would be carried out on the basis of the concept paper before us, which has accurately laid out the framework of the discussion. The formal aspects of the note in document S/2006/507 do not undermine the importance of this debate, and, has been said, format is a twin of freedom. The note codifies practices that have been imposed since the 1990s to accommodate the changes that have taken place in the international environment and the increasing acceptance of the role of the United Nations in dispute settlement. We have therefore left behind the atmosphere of confidentiality of previous decades and established rules for announcements, statements and important briefings. There is no doubt that doing so offers a response to some of the demands of the international community, in particular after the holding of the 2005 World Summit.

Despite all of that, ensuring continuous improvement means, by definition, that such efforts must be continued. The note is not the first attempt — and will not the last — and, as stated in its introduction, it is no more than a number of measures that were previously agreed upon.

To summarize, complex texts that are difficult to understand do not provide an adequate response to the issues evoked, including those contained in the Secretariat's document addressed to the Council dated 17 February 2007. That response highlights the fact that progress must be made on other elements, and a balance must be struck between the question of whether to hold informal consultations or meetings on the one hand and the type of meetings to be held on the other. Informal consultations, which take up most of our time must only be resorted to in exceptional circumstances. How can we respond to demands for reform and deal with matters that are important to all those who work for the Council, under Articles 24 and 30 of the Charter, when we are dealing with a nearly invisible body that is continuously in session behind closed doors, without any need or any objective justification for such an institution?

Concerning meetings, if the note considers public meetings more important than private meetings, the many types of open meetings and public meetings and the reasons for selecting each one of them need more objective checks and definitions. We believe that an open debate, which is closer to a public debate, under rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure, must be considered more important than debates in any other format. That has not, regretfully, been the case. There is still hesitation — albeit often selective — within the Council in resorting to that format.

We have no doubt that more transparency would enhance the legitimacy of our resolutions and promote their wider acceptance. Such acceptance will be achieved when the background and the different points of view in our debates are known by all and our commitment to the principles of the United Nations and Article 24 of the Charter can be verified by all. Some might say that an increase in transparency would be at the expense of the efficiency that is so important for a body responsible for international peace and security. But in focusing on efficiency, we should look beyond mere decision-making: an increase in transparency will not affect efficiency if it is carried out in the following manner.

First, we must expand open debates, particularly on issues that have been under lengthy consideration by the Council, so that open debates become the rule and anything else the exception. The limitation of open debates or their late announcement affects the right of those interested in addressing the Council to do so and makes their participation more rhetorical than actual or effective.

Secondly, we must develop the other formats of open debates, particularly press briefings, so that they allow wider participation, which would respond to the needs of smaller States for comprehensive briefings. Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, in particular, address that matter.

Thirdly, we must develop and codify the participation of States that are not members of the Council in the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council.

Fourthly, we must deepen the Council's relationship with regional organizations such as the African Union, since many of the issues that are considered before the Council have a direct impact on their members.

There is no doubt that procedural matters evoke differences among Member States, something that the United Nations has known since its inception. The adoption of the rules of procedure of the Council has been frozen for a long time, and those rules remain provisional. There are many demands, of course, from within the Council and General Assembly as well as from outside, that we take some sort of action concerning this issue.

A working group has been established and continues to undertake very important efforts under the leadership of Ambassador Arias. We are committed, under the terms of concept paper S/2006/507, to continue to work for that purpose. The working group has presented today a very important issue concerning its work. We support its work and we would like to get a briefing as soon as possible on that matter.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): Allow me to first of all welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General at this debate and to thank him for his statement.

The Security Council today is, by general account, a remarkably more robust and intensive body than was the case a decade or more ago. Nowadays, the United Nations is becoming involved in an ever-increasing number of conflicts. There is an ever-increasing demand for United Nations peacekeepers and monitors. Sanctions and other effective measures are being applied to more and more cases worldwide. In addition, there is the modern scourge of terrorism and new threats such as the potential spread of weapons of mass destruction, all of which require special and detailed attention by the United Nations, its subsidiary bodies, in particular the Security Council, and Member States.

When all of that is taken into consideration, the question remains: how can we comprehensively, adequately and effectively address those issues while at the same time not detrimentally affecting the work of this unique international body in the implementation of its mandate?

As we have just mentioned, the agenda of the Security Council has become increasingly active in recent years. It is only natural that the interest of the general membership in its working methods has also increased. Questions have already been put forward on issues such as the transparency of the Council's work, the Council's effectiveness and efficiency, as well as

interaction, cooperation and the general participation in the work of the Security Council by members and non-members alike, including troop-contributing countries, and the evolving role of regional organizations vis-à-vis the United Nations. Moreover, as was emphasized in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (General Assembly resolution 60/1), achieving greater transparency and better and more effective implementation of sanctions regimes imposed by the Security Council is another issue that merits continued debate.

Croatia welcomes the good work and progress achieved so far in approaching those issues by both elected and non-elected members of the Council. We especially thank the delegations of Japan, Slovakia and Panama for their excellent stewardship of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as well as the so-called group of the Small Five, an important group whose efforts have gone a long way in stimulating those debates. We would especially like to offer our appreciation to Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan, whose efforts while chairing the Working Group led to the Council approving the note contained in document S/2006/507, which is the subject of today's debate.

Croatia supports the recommendation contained in the note, while at the same time believing that implementation of certain points contained therein needs to strike a balance between desirability and expeditiousness. We welcome the achievement of greater transparency in the Council's work through briefings by the presidency to non-Council members, including regular meetings with troop-contributing countries, and an increasing number of open meetings of the Council.

Even though my delegation supports having more open meetings, that idea should be tempered with a sense of what Council members wish to achieve in those meetings. While some may recall that prior to the 1990s, the Council conducted more of its business in open rather than closed meetings, one needs to keep in mind that the Council's agenda at the time was far less ordered and indeed less full.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the Security Council's primary mandate is maintaining international peace and security, and that, and only that, should be the driving force in deciding the format of its meetings. Any reflections on or possible reform of working methods must be conducted in that light so as to help facilitate the more efficient and effective functioning of the Security Council as a whole.

Conversely, the Council may wish to make better use of the wish for consultations and participation in its deliberations by countries particularly affected, including possibly countries host to peacekeeping operations, neighbouring States or even countries that are targeted for sanctions or that have sanctions implemented against them. My delegation has long believed that including or consulting with a country host to a peacekeeping operation during discussions among Council members on the future of that country can be beneficial to the Council's decision-making process.

Included in that are regional and subregional organizations. Such organizations are often ideally placed to help or advise the Security Council on overcoming crises erupting on a local or regional level. Using their expertise or having them pronounce on various crises not only should become common practice during open meetings, but also should be taken up during consultations among Council members, possibly by having them brief one or more interested Council members upon request.

The President's note and its recommendations were designed to improve the efficiency of the work of the Council. We believe that, through its practical implementation, that goal will be largely achieved. At the same time, we believe that the question of reforming or improving the working methods is not a static process and that further modifications to the aforementioned note through the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions may be appropriate at some time in the future.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and you, Mr. President, for having organized this open meeting on the implementation of measures adopted in July 2006 to improve the effectiveness and transparency of the work of the Security Council and to enhance its interaction with the other States Members of the United Nations.

France has always been concerned that the working methods of the Security Council should enable the Council not only to act effectively, which is fundamental to its credibility as the principal organ for

maintaining international peace and security, but also to maintain a transparent and interactive relationship with the entire membership of the United Nations.

Fourteen years ago, in this same type of debate on working methods, the Permanent Representative of France noted that there was a certain "malaise" in relations between the Council and other Member States, and noted that the malaise was largely due to the fact that the Council's work was being conducted behind closed doors and without publicity. There was frustration on the part of non-members with the lack of information from Council members, who had little opportunity to exchange information with Member States with an interest in the agenda items. To improve that situation, France proposed a return to the spirit of rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, where it says: "Unless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public".

That 1994 debate launched a real evolution. The opportunities for public meetings were extended, with the holding of policy debates, making it possible to hear the views of States interested in various ways in the items under consideration, as well as the organization of public exchanges of views among Council members on subjects not warranting private treatment. Since then, the Council has continued to improve its methods and procedures in that spirit of openness, and the note by the President of July 2006 was both the embodiment and amplification of those efforts.

It is worth mentioning that that evolution coincided with the development of the Council as an active body, seeking to play fully its key role in resolving issues of maintaining international peace and security. That demonstrates well, we believe, that the opening of the Council to the outside and the enhancement of its transparency and its interaction with the rest of the United Nations also responded to the objective of effectiveness — which is in no way opposed to openness. Quite the contrary.

The Council acts on behalf of all Member States and can act effectively only if it respects two conditions. It must take into consideration the concerns of Member States but also be accountable to them, which is possible only if there is openness and transparency. Of course, as we already emphasized in 1994, effectiveness also requires an appropriate split of Security Council activity between public meetings and the private consultations that are necessary to the conduct of negotiations and to the development of compromises.

In that respect, we believe the figures given in the President's concept paper (S/2008/528, annex) indicate a good balance. They show that the percentage of official Security Council meetings since 2006 has always been slightly greater than that of consultation meetings, while the proportion of official private meetings is very low. That balance seems satisfactory, in that it enables the Council to conduct the negotiations necessary to prepare decisions, which need a high number of informal meetings, and at the same time to interact sufficiently with the other Member States in official meetings.

My delegation also believes that the list of possible formats for meetings in the annex to the note (S/2006/507) gives the Council enough flexibility to allow it to choose the best format depending on the issue being considered. Once again, the spirit of rule 48 means that official meetings should be public as far as possible.

My delegation should like to note that consultations should remain what they are: informal meetings for preparing decisions and for negotiations. We do not believe it would be desirable to regulate them more. On the contrary, they should remain informal and interactive, in keeping with their purpose, and not aim to replace the substance of official meetings.

Still on the subject of transparency, my delegation should like to recall the considerable progress emphasized in the concept paper, which was achieved thanks to the distribution of programmes of work and meeting announcements through modern means of communication. Direct informational notes to non-members of the Council from the Council President and the Chairs of subsidiary bodies are also extremely useful in that regard.

Something more important than it might appear and that should be explored is how we add and remove agenda items on the list of matters of which the Council is seized. The present modalities for removing from the list items of which the Council is no longer seized are most restrictive and in a very specific way make it difficult to add certain items. Thus, the list is not always as precise as it should be about the substance of the Council's deliberations: either it

contains obsolete items or does not precisely mention other items. I believe that we need a more flexible way of managing the list to make it a better source of information on the matters of which the Council is seized.

On the question of interaction with all Member States, the concept paper rightly notes the importance of consultation with Member States not members of the Council that are directly involved or specifically affected when preparing and drafting decisions. Measures making possible effective participation by such States and by representatives of regional organizations in official meetings of the Council would also be very useful. My delegation believes that the best possible use should be made of possible procedural modalities to enhance the interactivity of our meetings.

In conclusion, my delegation commends Ambassador Arias for the manner in which he is chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Under his chairmanship, the Group has done useful work on the list of matters of which the Council is seized. The Working Group has accepted Ambassador Arias's proposal that it should continue to work on that issue, along with three other matters that are at the heart of today's debate: the format of meetings and the implementation of paragraph 26 of document S/2006/507 regarding increased transparency of open meetings and paragraph 35 on various options for meetings; participation by Council members at various stages of decision-making and negotiation, including their association with the work of subsidiary bodies; and the role of the President of the Council and the Chairs of subsidiary bodies with respect to the broader public and to documentation and procedure.

It seems to us that the programme of work adopted by the Working Group should enable it to engage in useful thinking on methods and procedures with a view to presenting possible recommendations to the Council by the end of the year. That could be one of the outcomes of today's discussion.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): The United States welcomes this opportunity to have an exchange of views with other United Nations Member States on the implementation of the measures set out in the annex to the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), issued in July 2006. The Council takes seriously the Charter mandate in Article 30, that it shall adopt its rules of procedure, and takes equally seriously the importance of making sure that other United Nations Members, our partners in the maintenance of international peace and security, are informed and appropriately involved in the Council's work.

For over a decade there has been an ongoing dynamic effort in the Security Council to ensure that information concerning the Council's work is readily available to all United Nations Member States. Increased use of Internet websites has facilitated this process.

The elected members of the Council have made significant contributions to this effort, particularly through their active participation in the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. All members of the Council have supported the effort to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. In July 2006, they expressed their commitment to implementing the measures devised for that purpose.

The Security Council has issued a steady stream of notes by its President aimed at demystifying Council practice and procedures. The notes have been published as official United Nations documents and are listed in the Security Council's report for the year in which they were adopted. Most also appear in a topical index published in February 2006. They cover a broad range of relevant subjects, including the agenda, the annual report, briefings, documentation, meetings and formats. Highlights of these notes are presented in a concise and user-friendly list in the annex to document S/2006/507.

Today's debate offers an opportunity for the Council to meet with the beneficiaries of that list to hear first-hand whether the practical application of the innovations listed in the annex to document S/2006/507 have helped them to follow the Council's work. It is a consumer survey which gives Member States an opportunity to voice their views on implementation.

At the same time, receptivity to the measures taken by the Council remains disappointing. We had hoped that the briefings by the Council's President would provide first-hand information to Member States, but attendance at those briefings has been sparse. Similarly, despite the Council's efforts to have

greater recourse to public meetings, the Chamber is often half-empty. Nor has identification of the formats used in Council meetings — designed to assist other Member States in understanding the nature and purpose of the scheduled exchanges of views — stimulated participation. In May, when the Chairmen of the Council's Committees briefed on counter-terrorism activities, a topic of concern certainly to all Member States, less than 10 non-members of the Council joined the debate.

We hope the wider membership will take better advantage of the improvements already made to Council working methods, and we intend to listen carefully to constructive comments in order to assess the effectiveness of practices and measures taken by the Council to enhance efficiency and transparency. That information will inform the future efforts of the Council's Working Group on documentation and procedure.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to organize this important open debate of the Council. I thank the Secretary-General for his participation and his statement.

My delegation has always strongly advocated the convening of an open debate which would provide an opportunity for all interested United Nations Member States to share their assessments of the progress in the implementation of the presidential note contained in document S/2006/507 of July 2006 and contribute ideas on how to further its effective implementation.

We share the views contained in the statement to be delivered by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), which stresses that reform of the Security Council should not be confined only to the question of the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Council, but should also address substantive issues relating to the Council's agenda, working methods and decision-making process. We further share the view of NAM that transparency, openness and consistency are key elements that the Council should observe.

From a body that used to meet only a few times a month, the Council has turned into one that held 219 formal meetings and 177 consultations of the whole between August 2007 and July 2008. We commend the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as well as the Secretariat, for their efforts to enhance the implementation of the measures agreed upon through the July 2006 note with a view to making the work of the Council more efficient. We are encouraged by positive developments to that end, particularly a growing trend towards transparency, with an unprecedentedly large number of open meetings held by the Council, and more intensive participation by non-member States in the Council's work than ever before.

Regarding the commitment set out in paragraph 29 of the July 2006 note, during the first six months of this year, the countries concerned spoke first on 25 occasions in 34 Council meetings with their presence. We also appreciate the efforts of all Council members to intensify consultations with the broader United Nations membership, in particular interested Member States, their neighbouring countries and regional organizations and groups of friends. To further the Council's work in this direction, while supporting all the recommendations by NAM contained in the aforementioned statement, I wish to emphasize the importance of the following measures.

First, due attention should be given to the Council's regular consultations with the parties concerned, including regional and international organizations. We consider as useful practices such as the President's briefings to the public and the media and the July presidency's consultation with not only Council members, but also the United Nations membership at large, in the process of preparing the annual report on the work of the Council to be submitted to the General Assembly, and we believe that such practices should become routine.

Secondly, Member States should be allowed — in fact, they should be invited — to present their views before the Council takes action concerning them. That would make the Council's decisions accepted as more legitimate and fairer, and thus more conducive to cooperation by Member States in the process of implementation.

Thirdly, more open debates, such as the one we are having today, should be convened in order to give the general United Nations membership greater opportunities to express their views on related issues. In order to avoid abuse in that regard and the perception of double standards in any Member State's support for that measure, it must be coupled with

efforts to avoid Council involvement in issues not falling within the purview of its mandate, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. Transparency must not be promoted at the cost of making the work of the Council overlap with that of other bodies, such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and development and other agencies, and hence of weakening their coordination.

Fourthly, resort to Chapter VII of the Charter in order to address issues that, by their nature, are not threats to international peace and security must be avoided so as not to create a confrontational atmosphere or situations in which the Council cannot act or speak with one voice, or even situations that could lead to the possibility of vetoes. My delegation and the majority of Member States believe that, pending their eventual elimination, vetoes should be confined to matters truly appropriate for consideration under that Chapter.

As a responsible non-permanent member of the Security Council, Viet Nam has been trying its best to contribute to the improvement of the Council's working methods, in the interest of the entire United Nations membership and of international peace and security. In carrying out our task as President of the Council last month, we were guided by the aforementioned concerns. We look forward to working with the other members of the Council and of the United Nations at large in that direction.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, permit me to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for the holding of this public debate on a topic of particular importance to my delegation. We are confident that your dedication and leadership will ensure that our deliberations today will have concrete results that will optimize the Council's work. We also highlight the Secretary-General's presence at this debate, which clearly shows the Organization's commitment to promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of the Security Council. In addition, I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Small Five group, in particular Ambassador Urbina and the delegation of Costa Rica, to promote this debate.

The Security Council's working methods are not an end in themselves, but one of the ways to ensure that the Council fulfils, as efficiently and effectively as possible, the obligations and responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

Before making a few specific comments, we believe we should point out that the Security Council, because it is an organ whose membership is limited, will always have a problem of representativity. What is more, today it is generally accepted that the Council does not reflect current socio-political realities. That lack of representativity means that the Council's working methods must be aimed at, inter alia, correcting that deficiency to the extent possible.

From that perspective, we shall analyse a number of the topics that, concerning the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), have been presented in the current presidency's concept paper (S/2008/528) and that we believe to be of particular importance.

With regard to the holding of Council meetings, it is important to note that article 48 of the provisional rules of procedure states that the Security Council, unless it decides otherwise, should meet in public. In Panama's opinion, unless there are important reasons justifying the opposite, all Member States should be allowed unconditional access to Council meetings. That alone would contribute significantly to the transparency of the Council's work, its interaction with Member States and, hence, its effectiveness. Likewise, it is vital that the Secretariat's reports be disseminated to all Member States in a timely manner.

Furthermore, the Council's effectiveness depends on the appropriateness of its decisions and on their due implementation. To that end, it is particularly important that the Council take its decisions after it has become thoroughly familiar with the relevant situations and their consequences. In order to gain such a level of understanding, it is necessary to know and understand the views of each and every country that could be affected by the Council's decisions. Such Council consultations should be broadened to permit greater participation in the Council's deliberations by persons or groups other than Member States. In addition, such consultations should be held as often as required. In particular, however, they should be held sufficiently in advance so that they can achieve the desired goal of informing the Council's decisions.

In that context, it should be pointed out that the adoption of the mechanism known as the Arria Formula meeting was a significant step forward in the

process of enhancing the transparency of the Council's work. The Arria Formula must now be formalized and broadened with a view to greater participation. That principle applies both to the Council and to its subsidiary bodies. In that connection, Panama wishes to reaffirm its support for the practice of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict of inviting to its meetings countries affected by its decisions, as an example to be followed by all subsidiary bodies of the Security Council., We believe that that practice has particular relevance for the Counter-Terrorism Committee as a subsidiary body.

Finally, Panama would like to reiterate that the thematic debates of the Security Council should be aimed principally at discussing matters under the Council's consideration and informing the Council as to the positions of Member States in that regard, and that such debates should not serve as a way for Member States to air their views on general issues. There are other, more appropriate forums for that purpose, in particular the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate our position that the Security Council's working methods are not an end in themselves, but one of the ways to ensure that the Council can carry out the duties and responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, which shows his interest in the well-being and the strengthening of the entire Organization.

I wish to thank the Belgian delegation and you in particular, Mr. President, for having granted the request made two months ago by the delegations of Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, and my own delegation, that an open debate be held on the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), submitted in 2006.

As Council members are well aware, agreement to hold this debate was not easy to reach. The idea that the working methods of the Security Council are the exclusive domain of its members is a stumbling block that has always been difficult to overcome.

Costa Rica speaks today, unsurprisingly, as a member of the General Assembly. This is our only permanent status, which guides our perspective and our interests and which cannot be different from the interests of the Organization when considered as a whole.

The premise established in Article 24 of the Charter, according to which Member States acknowledge that the Security Council acts on Members' behalf, seems to be a one-way street. Member States must recognize that the Council acts on their behalf, but the Council does not often recognize that it acts on behalf of the member States. This perception, according to which the Council is an autonomous organ independent of the membership of the United Nations, must yield to the unshakeable realities of our time. We live in an age in which the transparency of decision-making processes and the accountability of representatives to the represented have been established as solid principles in all organizations, independent of their nature.

Let's be clear: no one is attempting to take decisions that, because of their nature, fall under the purview of the Council and no one is expecting a revolution in the working methods of the Council. An important group of Member States, as reflected in the requests received by the President, aspires simply to have the Council listen to their assessments of the way it carries out its duties and to some suggestions, which may very well improve the efficacy and the legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

The attitude of some members of the Council, who seem hesitant to examine the Council's working methods in an open debate, seems to indicate that more than simply a change in the norms of the Council is necessary — there needs to be a change in the Council's attitude. That is what these last few months have shown us since we became members of the Council. It seems that the culture that has become entrenched here in the last few years has fostered the unity of this body as an end in itself, which was not always the case. The diversity of interests among the permanent members and the elected members should not be mentioned, even less so the possibility of clarifying procedural matters or deciding the format of a meeting through a vote. Of all the cultural norms of the Council, however, the most detrimental is the attitude of exclusion in relation to the great majority of Member States, whose presence in the Council is very rare, if even having taken place at all.

The 2006 note by the President marks an important milestone in the history of the Security

Council. This is an opportune moment to recognize the work of the former representative of Japan, Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, as well as Ambassadors Peter Burian of Slovakia and Ricardo Arias of Panama, who succeeded Mr. Oshima in the chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Certainly, the note represents the crystallization of a process that had been going on for the fifteen years prior. It analysed and resolved, at least in theory, many of the concerns of the membership of this Organization. Nevertheless, the periodic examination of the Council's practices makes it possible to conclude that the challenge of consistently implementing adopted agreements and rules still remains.

Notwithstanding the decisions that have been made, Costa Rica believes this Council should be interested even more in the input that can be given by those who have a legitimate interest or are going to be directly affected by the Council's decisions. Despite the agreements reached in this direction, its practice reveals important shortcomings.

The frequent use of informal mechanisms should be the usual practice before reaching agreements in the Council. A decision-making process that does not include transparent and direct communication of the Council, as a whole, with interested parties cannot be considered legitimate.

Another subject that deserves greater attention is the public aspect of the actions of the Council. Although it is true that there has been progress in the number of public meetings as compared to other years, we are far from the spirit of the norm, which establishes that every meeting of the Council is a public meeting as a general rule, unless expressly decided otherwise.

We recognize that there are situations that demand discretion, but we disagree with a practice that has in fact inverted the language of the norm. It is also true that public meetings demand a greater degree of preparation and require greater responsibility from all of us. However, none of this justifies the non-compliance of a stipulation that was adopted by the Council and whose compliance is demanded by a large part of the membership of the Organization.

In looking at the six meeting formats of paragraph 35 of the President's note, four guarantee greater access to countries which are not members of the Security Council. The Secretariat has the duty to facilitate the application of this existing rule, which favours transparency and accountability, by presenting open formats for all meetings as a first option in the proposed programme of work, prepared by each presidency of the Council. It is up to the members of the Council to argue and to convince others regarding the use of a private format on an exceptional basis.

With regard to the implementation of paragraph 27 of the note, I will not dwell on that subject much, but, before I conclude, I want to reiterate the shared responsibility of all members of the Organization, whether they are members of the Security Council or not, to contribute to the correct implementation of all agreements on the working methods of the Council.

We often witness a lack of interest of many members of the Organization in the work of the Council, a lack of attention to the information that is available and the sparse use made of the opportunities offered. Those opportunities must be taken advantage of, rights must be exercised and the responsibility must be assumed.

We have defended, in the abstract, the opening of channels for participation prior to the taking of decisions. We are willing to do so concretely in accordance with the explicit requests of interested parties. Not all of the doors of the Council are closed, and we are willing to work to open them up more and more. But these doors will remain open only if interest is shown in using them. We spoke before of the need for a change in the prevailing culture more than a change in norms. This change in the prevailing culture includes all of us: the Council, the Secretariat and each and every one of the Member States.

I wish to conclude by affirming that the holding of this debate, which is an important achievement, must be a responsible and constructive exercise. I would also conclude by affirming that all of us, especially the members of the Council, must keep in mind that all exercise of accountability has, by virtue of its nature, ingredients of criticism, which should not perturb anyone. The price of constructive and beneficial criticism is the possibility of the misuse of these opportunities, and this is a small price to pay for the gains that are derived from a frank and constructive exchange.

If we can share this spirit — being open to dialogue, to constructive criticism and to creative

suggestions — we should agree that it is not necessary, neither is it possible, to have to wait another 14 years to have a further opportunity to debate about matters regarding the working methods of the Council with all the Member States. We advocate for periodic open debates on these issues every two years, so that each elected member can have at least one opportunity, during its tenure of membership of the Council, to debate the working methods of this organ. Today, we are sure that this exchange will enrich the discussions at the core of the Working Group on Documentation with a view to making decisions, and we are going to work to make this happen.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We too welcome the participation of the Secretary-General in our debate today. My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement that Cuba will make on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, a statement that goes to great lengths to point out some of the working methods that need to be considered during this debate.

The Charter of the United Nations has endowed the Security Council with a mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security and the power to take decisions that bind sovereign States. By doing so, it gives the Council a far-reaching impact on the lives of many people in the world.

For this reason, we welcome the improvements in the working methods of the Security Council as detailed in document S/2006/507. While they are modest measures, they remain meaningful steps towards improving the work of the Council and are an effort to try to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. The challenge is to ensure that these measures are fully implemented and made permanent, so that the Security Council can be predictable.

In recent years, the Security Council has adopted various measures aimed at improving its working methods. However, as long as the rules of procedure of the Council remain provisional, those changes will always seem inadequate. Even if the working methods were dramatically improved in accordance with all the suggestions that have been made so far, the core problem would remain, namely, that over the past 60 years, the Security Council has witnessed the gradual erosion of its credibility and authority. Its representativity has been challenged increasingly, as it addresses matters that have expanded beyond the vision that the founders of the United Nations foresaw in 1945.

In our view, the Security Council must be reformed to address both enlargement in its categories of membership and improvement in its working methods. Anything less is papering over the cracks in the foundation on which this organ was built more than 60 years ago.

In the past decades, permanent members of the Security Council have sought to utilize the Council to further issues in their own interest. There have also been occasions where resolutions of the Council have been brought up for decision with little or no opportunity for meaningful discussion by its entire membership. We have always had been troubled by the fact that issues such as Kosovo, Western Sahara, non-proliferation, and even Georgia, are regarded as of interest, at least to some members of the Council, to the exclusion of other issues. On the question of the Middle East, people around the world are well aware that the Council has remained paralysed in trying to address the plight of the Palestinian people 40 years after the illegal occupation of their land.

This problem is further complicated when the Council deals with issues that involve groups of friends and contact groups that draw on States Members of the United Nations from outside the Council. Typically, these small groups are dominated by or entirely comprised of developed countries. They usually operate in secrecy and seek to impose their views on the rest of the membership of the Security Council by drafting resolutions that the Council is then expected to endorse without any further discussion. For South Africa, given our desire for transparency and political inclusiveness, the small group phenomenon presents a significant problem.

Yet, we indeed endorse innovations that involve the groups of friends and contact groups as useful tools for the Council to reach out to consult with the broader membership. However, these outreach innovations will only be beneficial if they complement the work of the Council in an open, accountable and transparent manner.

On numerous occasions, the Council has been criticized for its tendency to encroach upon areas of responsibility assigned to other United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council, thus weakening the United Nations as a whole

and opening the Council's agenda for manipulation and the promotion of bilateral agendas. The Council can stem the erosion of its credibility and transcend the divisions and the national interests of its members by uniformly discharging its Charter-based mandate to maintain international peace and security.

The international community needs a Security Council that is representative and functions in an effective and predictable manner. The fact that the Council has always operated through provisional rules of procedure is central to this debate. It also does not help that, when the Council was created, the membership of the United Nations as a whole constituted 51 countries — a number that has now almost quadrupled — and that since its creation the Council has been expanded only once — over 40 years ago. Again, until the Council is fully representative and can operate in a manner that is easily understood, its credibility, legitimacy and even its working methods will always be challenged.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to thank you and your delegation for organizing today's Council meeting on its working methods. We believe that a dialogue on these important issues requires a balanced, professional approach, and one that does not politicize the substance of the item under discussion.

Russia, as a permanent member of the Council, favours increasing the effectiveness of the Council's work, while maintaining its expeditiousness, with a reasonable balance between transparency and effectiveness in its work. We will not forget that the important thing is to build the Council's capacity to carry out its prerogatives under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The questions of enhancing the working methods of the Council lie within its exclusive competency. These questions must be considered within the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Work in this area is not public, yet it should be done on a planned basis and through rational, constructive interaction with all interested delegations of States Members of the United Nations.

In recent years, significant progress has been achieved in increasing the openness of the work of the Council, as evidenced by the regular practices of holding open meetings, of inviting interested parties to them, of briefings by the President of the Council for United Nations Members, and of consultation with a wide range of international participants.

Increasing the quality of its interaction with other members of the Organization in connection with issues falling under the Council's competency is a key element in improving the Council's working methods. It is currently our practice to establish ways and means to carry out dialogue between the Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, other United Nations bodies, regional organizations and international partners. The current mechanisms for interaction work; however, there is no doubt in this regard that, working together, we could focus on finding additional ways to enhance them.

We support further strengthening the practice of holding active consultations between members of the Council and countries contributing troops to peacekeeping operations, in order to ensure that those countries can participate at the earliest stages of planning for such operations. In doing that we must fully utilize exiting procedures as well as previously adopted Council decisions in this area. This has to work like a two-way street. It is important that the Council also receive the fullest assessment possible from troop-contributing countries with regard to the relevant issues. We believe that troop-contributing countries will participate more actively with members during Council meetings.

We believe that increasing transparency in the work of the Council could benefit from the Russian initiative on reinvigorating the Military Staff Committee to ensure the relevant level of military expertise as the Council develops the military aspects of its peacekeeping operations. The time has come for that body to function with its full Council membership. We believe that implementing this proposal should be of interest to both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council. Under the provisions of the Charter, there is an opportunity for constructive involvement in the Committee's work by interested countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We believe that any enhancement of the working methods of the Security Council must continue to take place on a regular basis within the Working Group especially established by the Council for that purpose,

which is currently headed by Ambassador Arias. We welcome the very constructive cooperation that exists in that body. That work should be subordinate to the priority task of effective and expeditious work on the part of the Council in maintaining international peace and security, in strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica for calling today's debate, as well as you, Mr. President, for convening the meeting. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for the interest that he has shown in the meeting.

Continually improving the way we work is a practice relevant to all international organizations. Its basic objective is at the heart of my Prime Minister's initiative on international institutional reform. All organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, have a responsibility to ensure that they work effectively and transparently. The views expressed here, including by non-members of the Council, will inform the ongoing work of the Council on its working methods.

The United Kingdom played a full and active part in the drafting of the 2006 note (S/2006/507) by the President and fully supports its implementation. There is much being done already. Individual Council members have an obligation to do all they can to promote and implement the measures we have agreed. For example, during the United Kingdom's presidencies of the Council we made it a priority to notify Council members in advance of a meeting of the main themes under consideration, to help focus the discussion. We also briefed non-members of the Council at the beginning and end of our presidencies, as well as immediately following each discussion of the Council.

Beyond those times during which we held the presidency, we have sought the view of a wide range of interlocutors on issues under discussion by the Council — for example, through the use of Arria Formula meetings. A case in point is our work on Somalia, where an Arria Formula meeting in March provided an opportunity to hear views from outside organizations involved in Somalia. That fed directly into the Council's work. We also hosted an Arria Formula discussion on sexual violence in conflict, followed by the open debate under the United States presidency later in June.

There are some welcome trends towards greater transparency in the Security Council. The Council now meets more in formal meetings and has fewer informal consultations in proportion to the year 2000, for instance. The Council's discussions on Timor-Leste last week illustrated our flexibility with regard to the format of meetings. We had both formal debate and private consultations, allowing for participation by interested parties and interactive discussion between Council members and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. There will always be a need to balance transparency with the need for the Council to be able to work effectively. It is right that the Council continue to look for ways to open up its work to non-members.

The Council has also shown a greater willingness to consult and take advice from expert bodies. Expert panels assist with the monitoring of sanctions and assist the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). In the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate the Council has institutionalized a standing body of expertise designed to monitor global standards mandated by the Council. The Peacebuilding Commission is well-placed to create a new centre of expertise.

The Council is working harder. Twenty-four substantive subjects were discussed in the period 1996-1997. Ten years later, from 2006-2007, the number had doubled to 49. Ad hoc committees that deal with a range of thematic issues, such as children in armed conflict, sanctions and peacekeeping operations, have been created. That thematic approach feeds directly into country-specific issues, broadening the debate and highlighting linkages between different issues on the Council's agenda. All of that helps us in our primary role of maintaining international peace and security.

The Council has also increased its interaction with regional organizations. We have responded to requests from African countries to enhance our relationship with the African Union and its peace and security machinery. That led to meetings of the Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council in 2007 and 2008.

Those are all positive trends, but this is an ongoing process. I would like to identify the following

areas where the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which is under Ambassador Arias's able chairmanship, could do further work.

First, we could consider our practice on the use of rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure for parties to a conflict who are not Member States to take advantage of the scope offered by that rule.

Secondly, we can look at further ways of keeping the Security Council agenda up to date and self-explanatory. The title of today's debate is a classic example of using bureaucratic language rather than something that can be readily understood by all.

Thirdly, we could take up the responsibility of the Council presidency to guide the Council without constraining it and ensure that the standards of effectiveness and transparency set out in the 2006 presidential note are implemented and upheld.

Those areas, as well as others that emerge today, will play a crucial part in informing the discussions of the Working Group. We look forward to taking that forward in the Group in due course. In closing, I would like to reaffirm the United Kingdom's commitment to ensuring that the Council is as transparent and as effective as possible.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by congratulating and thanking your delegation, Mr. President, for the initiative to hold this debate on such an important matter as that of the working methods of the Security Council. My delegation, of course, very much appreciated the presence of the Secretary-General at our meeting.

Exploring ways and means of improving the transparency and effectiveness of the work of the Security Council, thereby strengthening interaction with non-members, is a very commendable initiative that, beyond making it possible to consider calls made by non-members, also serves as a significant contribution to ongoing efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Council. The Council's working methods, which are at the centre of its work, also serve to give it legitimacy and to ensure greater acceptance of its decisions. In that connection, my delegation, which associates itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, would like to make some comments.

We welcome the progress achieved to ensure that the Security Council's work is more transparent, but additional efforts must be deployed in order to take into account, to a greater degree, the views expressed by the member States that are not members of the Council and to ensure that better information is available. That means, in particular, holding more public debates and also that, as far as possible, public briefing sessions be led by the chairmen of subsidiary bodies and special envoys and representatives of the Secretary-General.

We also believe that the report of the Council to the General Assembly should be more analytical, in order to give a better account of its activities to all Member States. In addition, when decisions are drafted, it would be appropriate to take into account certain existing recommendations on transparency, inter alia the note by the President of 17 February 1999 (S/1999/165), recommending that all Council members be able to fully participate in the drawing up of Council resolutions and presidential statements and have sufficient time for doing so. Submitting the texts of draft resolutions just before the deadline for their adoption, even if they are supported by groups of friends or other external partners, is a practice to be avoided. In our view, we should use the groups of friends as little as possible, since, even if they are useful on occasion, they can also sometimes hinder transparency and lead to frustration.

When it comes to the effectiveness of the Council's work, my delegation attaches the greatest importance to the timely distribution of reports in all the official languages, in compliance with the presidential note of 26 March 2002 (S/2002/316). That would enable delegations to make substantial contributions to debates, and allow national authorities to gain useful prior knowledge of those reports.

It is also important for the quality of its decisions that the Council be able to take into account the views expressed by non-member States in the course of its meetings. Decisions must therefore be taken after debates, so that, as far as possible, those decisions may reflect the views expressed. A better presentation of agenda items and a rationalization of the agenda could also enhance the work of the Council.

The issue of enhancing interaction and dialogue between the Council and non-member States is of particular importance to my delegation, as I have

already said. Here, we would recommend increased recourse to the Aria formula, which allows direct interaction between all interested stakeholders on a given issue. The Council would also gain from enhancing communications with the troop-contributing countries, whose opinions should be taken into due account, and from discussions with all Member States with information relating to operations in the field. In the same vein, we would suggest that the Council report on the missions it undertakes in public meetings, and that the representatives of the countries visited participate. Such missions put Council members in direct contact with the reality of the questions that they are dealing with, and that experience should therefore be shared with all Member States of the Organization.

Allow me to address the question of Security Council committees and to express our full support of the recommendations in the president's note of 29 March 1995 (S/1995/234), which lists the improvements that could be made to the procedures of those subsidiary bodies. Sanctions committees must enhance their communication with the States concerned and grant requests often made by countries that wish to speak during private committee meetings. We also believe that a detailed review of the listing and de-listing procedures of those committees should be carried out in order to ensure that such procedures are more transparent and in accordance with the relevant instruments on human rights.

I cannot conclude without adding my voice to those of the Member States who would like to see the formal adoption of a final version of the rules of procedure of the Council, instead of the provisional version that the Council has at present.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): Allow me to first of all join my colleagues in welcoming the Secretary-General's statement at this debate. That is yet another confirmation of the personal engagement of the Secretary-General in this very important issue for the Security Council.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and for the excellent concept paper that you have circulated. The concept paper is an effective and enlightening instrument for our work, enabling us to better understand what has been achieved thus far, two years after the issuance of presidential note S/2006/507, and what remains to be done. Today's debate is of the utmost importance. Too much time has passed since the last open debate of the Council on the issue of its working methods. Opening the Council to all Member States for this debate is a concrete development that we fully supported during the consultations in recent weeks.

A reform of the Council's working methods represents, for Italy, a priority objective in the United Nations reform process. Maintaining a direct and focused dialogue with Member States, particularly on the issue of working methods, has always been of fundamental importance and a point of reference for Italy. Our goal is to fulfil the expectations of Member States and to counter the risk of inertia within the Council, in order to foster a sense of ownership of the Council among all Member States and, conversely, prevent the Council from being perceived as isolated from the rest of the United Nations system.

Italy's action has long been characterized by a constructive attitude towards Council reform in all its aspects. We have actively participated in the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. I would like to congratulate and commend Ambassador Arias for his effective leadership in that Working Group.

We remain committed to a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Working methods also have a clear priority, in order to improve the imbalance in the relationship between the General Assembly and the Council. The desire for a constructive dialogue with the rest of Member States, including on working methods, has always been a characteristic of the Uniting for Consensus movement, and it remains a goal to which we are committed.

For Italy, transparency, openness, efficiency and interaction with the rest of Member States are crucial if we are to achieve substantial improvement in the Council's working methods. Many ideas for improvements have been voiced: fuller access to the Security Council, including through better and more regular communications by the Council to all Member States; more thematic debates in the General Assembly; improved and more detailed annual reports to the Assembly; renewed impetus for public meetings; and an effective system to prevent overlap and assure transparency in the subsidiary bodies. We also consider of the most crucial importance the close and effective cooperation between the Secretariat and the Council.

In order to achieve better use of the existing format of private meetings, we believe that, among the many possible improvements, a mechanism should be established to allow interested Member States to be heard confidentially, at their request, in what we could call private consultations in the Chamber. In particular circumstances, all Member States should have the opportunity to explain their position in a formal setting, in the context of a direct dialogue with members of the Council.

Those and other tasks will require adequate redefinition of the rules that govern the working methods. It is a goal that Council members should strive for on a daily basis. In that regard, I wish to praise the decision by the Vietnamese presidency in July to inform non-Council members of the preparation of the annual report on the work of the Security Council.

On interaction with the membership, allow me to bring up the issues of involving regional organizations in the Council's activities and the contribution they can make to its actions. A great deal has been achieved in that area in recent years. I am thinking, for example, of the development of regular contact and meetings between the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Security Council with regard to conflict prevention, crisis situations and the deployment of peacekeeping missions on the African continent.

To an increasing extent, regional organizations interact with the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council and contribute, for example, to the effectiveness of global action in the fight against terrorism and the application of sanctions regimes. In that regard, the European Union also plays a fundamental role. It has formed a partnership with the United Nations to cooperate in the areas of crisis management and peacekeeping operations. From the Balkans to the Middle East, from Africa to Asia, the European Union and the United Nations are working together on the ground, even under very difficult circumstances.

Regional organizations are the great new reality of today's international relations. Let me restate how crucial it has become to take into consideration that trend of our time, and may it be adequately reflected in the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Belgium.

Maintaining international peace and security has been one of the key objectives of the United Nations since its establishment. Thus, in 1945, the authors of the Charter decided to confer the main responsibility for that item to the Security Council, as the Charter says in Article 24, "in order to ensure prompt and effective action" on the part of the Organization. As a result, the credibility of the Security Council is based largely on that very ability to act in a prompt and effective manner.

Obviously, that capacity also depends, as others have emphasized before me, on the political will of its members. Article 24 of the Charter contains a second idea that is just as important. In meeting its responsibilities, the Council acts on behalf of all Members of the Organization. That provision is inextricably linked to two other important elements in any discussion on the Council's working methods: on the one hand, transparency, and on the other hand, interaction with Member States that are not members of the Council, in particular with those who are directly affected by specific situations. Some 60 years after the establishment of the United Nations, that transparency and need for access have become even more essential. The right balance between effectiveness, transparency and access remains a major challenge, even if those three principles are not, in my delegation's opinion, contradictory, but rather complementary.

So how do we meet that challenge? — first of all, through a pragmatic approach. The progress made since 1994, the year that the Council for the first time discussed its methods of work in a public meeting, demonstrates that the Council is adapting its working methods through a pragmatic and gradual approach. The presidential note in document S/2006/507, the so-called Japanese note adopted in July 2006, is the best evidence of that. It called on Council members to take measures that were sometimes not very spectacular in themselves but were important overall. The concept paper distributed by my delegation on 4 August provides a summary of those measures, so I shall not go back over that here.

Secondly, above all, it is up to the members themselves to be responsible for improving their way of working. The presidency plays an important role in

that area. As President of the Council in June 2007 and August 2008, Belgium, like other Council members, implemented the recommendations of note S/2006/507 in a consistent way, for example by inviting neighbouring States or countries with a particular contribution to make to participate in public meetings, or by ensuring that non-members that were directly interested would be able to take the floor before Council members. Obviously, not only the President of the Council plays a key role, but also the chairs of the subsidiary bodies, namely, by ensuring fair procedures, also have a particular responsibility, to which a number of speakers before me have already referred. All those measures have a direct impact on non-members of the Council. We hope that from now on they will benefit from the improvements in our working methods.

Thirdly, as well as safeguarding those gains, it is important to consider new measures to be taken. If such measures — concrete, constructive and achievable in the short term — emerge from this debate, my delegation would consider today's debate a success.

For my part, I would like to mention three such items. First, the deliberations of Council members would, no doubt, be enriched if there were more interaction with Member States that are associated with a conflict. While it is true that the provisional rules of the Council do not explicitly rule it out, it is still not the practice to invite non-members of the Council to private consultations. So, why not make better use of the existing mechanism of private meetings to hear the viewpoints of Member States, in the question-and-answer format, before Council consultations per se are held?

Secondly, the prospects of the Peacebuilding Commission are such that they add significant value. It has become more and more customary to invite the President of the Commission or chair of the country-specific configuration to participate in Council deliberations, as was the case yesterday when we discussed Burundi. That practice, which was not yet called for in the note of 2006, should, of course, be followed up on.

Finally, thirdly, my delegation attaches great importance to the Council having more in-depth interaction with regional and subregional organizations, which, as we know, play an important role in mediation efforts and in peacekeeping operations.

This year, we have already seen several examples of close interaction between the Council and the African Union. As a member of the European Union, my delegation would, of course, like to advocate better interaction with the European Union.

My delegation believes that the participation of the current presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe last week was, itself, also very useful. In that context, it might be useful to do more in-depth thinking on a better implementation of paragraph 30 of the note of 2006.

I have given you just a few preliminary ideas. Those ideas, as well as others that are emerging or will emerge from this debate, could be closely considered in the days and weeks ahead, for example within the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which is the right place for such discussions. In the next few weeks, my delegation is ready to work with other delegations, so that together we shall be able to make tangible progress towards our common objective, which is to have a Security Council that is more transparent, interactive and effective, and, as a result, more capable of acting in conformity with Article 24 of the Charter.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I should like to remind all speakers that we have asked them to limit the length of their statements to a maximum of five minutes, so that the Council will be able to conduct its deliberations with all the desired effectiveness. Those delegations who have a long statement to make are asked to present a condensed version in the Chamber, it being understood that the full version can be issued in print.

I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the representative of Japan.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): First of all, I strongly welcome your initiative to convene this discussion today. I also wish to express our appreciation to Costa Rica for its proposal to convene this meeting.

The continuous efforts of the members of the Security Council aimed at improving the Council's working methods in order to enhance its efficiency and transparency are commendable, and notable achievements and improvements have been made, as described in the concept paper for this open debate (S/2008/528, annex). We are very pleased to see such

developments building upon the efforts of Japan and other countries towards the adoption of the note by the President of the Council dated 19 July 2006 (S/2006/507). In this context, I would also like to express our great appreciation to the successive Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, who have made indispensable contributions in implementing the note. Ambassador Burian of Slovakia not only finalized a new note by the President of the Council (S/2007/749), but also set the course for its implementation, particularly in involving the Secretariat. We also know that, whenever the Council is facing procedural difficulties, Ambassador Arias of Panama acts as a guardian of the note in the Council. We hope that the active efforts through the Working Group will continue and that the positive momentum from 2006 will be maintained.

Improving the working methods benefits both the members and the non-members of the Council. As the concept of peace and security evolves and as States become increasingly interdependent economically and politically, the Council must actively engage the wider membership of the United Nations and develop more efficient working methods to ensure its responsiveness to emerging challenges. It is the Council that plays the leading role in this endeavour. We hope that those States which are granted a special responsibility in the Charter or through elections will spare no effort to respond to the needs and concerns of the Member States at large.

Allow me to make a few proposals on possible ways forward.

First, it is essential to engage States which have special interests or responsibilities regarding particular matters, in order to ensure the implementation and effectiveness of the Council's actions. The participation of non-members in the Council's meetings has been significantly improved. We are also aware that the relevant parties are consulted informally on a case-by-case basis. However, more needs to be done, particularly in ensuring the engagement of the troop-contributing countries and the financial contributing countries. Making better use of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations is desirable. It is important to have an informal exchange of views prior to a major adjustment to or the creation of a peacekeeping operation mandate in the Working Group. That should help in addressing the legitimate concerns of the major stakeholders, including troop contributors and financial contributors.

Secondly, the Security Council would certainly benefit from seeking more interactive relationships with the General Assembly and other organs. That is important to facilitate the complementarity of the organs. As the Security Council and the General Assembly have their own responsibilities and memberships, cross-cutting issues such as conflict prevention, peacebuilding, climate change and other relevant matters deserve substantive discussion in both organs, and one organ can make useful inputs to others based on those discussions. In addition, as Japan currently serves as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, I would like to express our gratitude to the Council for inviting the Chairs of the country-specific configurations to almost all of the Council's relevant meetings. We hope the Council will seek to make more active use of the Peacebuilding Commission as its advisory body. In this context, I believe that the regular meetings of the President of the Council and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission will continue to facilitate communication between the two organs.

Thirdly, the increasing number of public meetings, especially open debates, is welcome. However, I would like to point out that both members and non-members of the Council should make maximum efforts to ensure the effectiveness of such meetings by making focused and concise statements with specific and practical proposals and by pursuing action-oriented follow-up.

Fourthly and finally, in the context of reform of the Security Council, the issue of working methods is also an important component. There is no doubt about that. Japan believes, however, that not only the improvement of working methods but also the expansion of the Security Council is a crucial aspect of the reform of the Council. I would like to emphasize that the reform of the Security Council through the expansion of the Council should have a significant positive impact on the improvement of the Council's working methods.

Nowadays, everyone is aware of the importance of improving working methods, and we are always heartened to note that many representatives regularly carry the blue booklet which Japan voluntarily issued, in order to refer to the note and other useful

information in it. We reiterate our hope that the Council will give positive consideration to the publication of the booklet as an official document of the United Nations.

The improvement of the working methods of the Council is something that can never fully achieve its goals. The Security Council always needs to evolve in order to respond swiftly and effectively to ever-changing world challenges. A follow-up to the discussion in this open debate is essential in terms of further advancing this task and preserving what we have achieved since the adoption of the note by the President in 2006. Japan will continue to follow the development of this matter with great interest and will make utmost efforts to contribute to this endeavour.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): At the outset, Sir, I would like to commend you and the delegation of Belgium for the initiative to convene this open debate on the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council of 19 July 2006 (S/2006/507) and for creating this timely and welcome opportunity, when the members of the Security Council and other United Nations Member States are engaging in a direct exchange of views on how to ensure that the Security Council is more open, more transparent, more efficient and more effective and that, as a matter of principle, there is more dialogue and better interaction between members of the Council and other United Nations Member States, especially those directly affected, concerned and interested. I would also like to thank you for preparing a very valuable concept paper (S/2008/528, annex) containing many relevant points as well as some very useful data.

We welcome the presence of the Secretary-General at this open debate and thank him for his very informative briefing. It goes without saying that the Council and the Secretariat need to continue working very closely together on a whole range of issues pertaining to the Council's working methods.

I cannot start otherwise than by mentioning the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (General Assembly resolution 60/1), especially its paragraphs 153 and 154, whereby our heads of State or Government agreed on the need to adapt the Security Council's working methods so as to increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work. Increased transparency, efficiency and effectiveness are part and parcel of these efforts.

In 2006, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Slovakia was actively involved in the negotiation process stemming from the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, led by the Japanese chairmanship of the Security Council Informal Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which culminated in the adoption of the note contained in document S/2006/507. On this occasion, I would like once again to express our appreciation to the Japanese delegation for their tireless efforts and exemplary leadership in the process of agreeing and adopting the note. In 2007, as Chairman of the Working Group, Slovakia focused its efforts and endeavours mainly on thorough implementation of the note and on dealing with a range of practical issues pertaining to documentation and other procedural questions. We appreciate the efforts of the delegation of Panama as the 2008 Chair of the Working Group.

We believe that many good results have been achieved over the past two years through adopting the note and striving to fully implement it. All Council members have been actively engaged in this endeavour. We are convinced that everybody who has been following the work of the Security Council for some time has to agree now that there have been considerable improvements, for example when it comes to the number of public meetings and open briefings and as regards the availability and accessibility of timely information about the work of the Council. We are very pleased to see, inter alia, that it has recently become much more common for countries directly concerned to take the floor before Council members and that representatives of regional and subregional organizations are more often invited to take part in various forms of the Council's work.

I will refrain from giving details about what specific issues we focused on as 2007 Chair of the Working Group; those details are part of the written statement that will be distributed. I would just like to highlight the fact that, in an effort to further facilitate an exchange of views related to the efforts to enhance the efficiency, openness and transparency of the Council's work, as well as of the Council's regular dialogue and interaction with other Member States, my delegation convened an Arria Formula meeting, which was held on 13 December 2007. This was generally seen as an innovative opportunity to discuss that relevant topic. A brief summary of the meeting and the

related recommendations were set out in a document issued under the symbol S/2007/784.

In spite of everything that I have said so far, we do not believe that there is still time for complacency or for a feeling that the job has already been done. We have always seen the 2006 note by the President of the Security Council and its implementation as works in progress. The note and the agreed measures contained therein are only first and fairly modest — although very important — steps in the long term-effort to increase the openness, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's work. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage the members of the Council to fully and consistently implement all agreed measures, as well as to continue discussing and assessing further practical ways and means to move things further along. The views expressed by other Member States, including at today's open debate, should be taken duly into account.

In addition, on the basis of its own recent experience as an elected member of the Security Council, Slovakia believes that further efforts in the near future should be focused on the following four areas.

First, continuing efforts should be made to enhance the transparency and openness of the Council's work, including, and in particular, with regard to the work of its subsidiary bodies.

Secondly, there must be continuing efforts to enhance and widen the interaction and the dialogue between the Council and other United Nations Member States, in particular those directly affected, concerned and interested. That issue is directly or indirectly referred to in at least 22 paragraphs of the 2006 note and is the sole topic of at least eight paragraphs. This could also be achieved through better use of private Council meetings, more regular use of Arria Formula meetings and the holding of regular consultations between members and non-members of the Council on relevant issues.

Thirdly, there must be a revitalization of private Security Council meetings with the troop-contributing countries. Such meetings have recently become too formalistic and have lost much of their original value, as envisaged in particular in resolutions 1353 (2001) and 1327 (2000) and in numerous presidential statements, most of which were adopted between 1994 and 2004.

Fourthly, continuing efforts must be made to maximize the relevance of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly, including by making the annual report more substantive and more analytical and by holding an interactive discussion on it with the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Slovakia remains fully committed to the cause of the Council's openness, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. We stand ready to continue contributing to the ongoing discussions and to concrete action aimed at achieving that long-term goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the representative of Slovakia for having abridged the written version of his statement.

I now call on the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland.

The group of five small countries ("S-5 group") thanks you, Mr. President, for having organized this open debate. We are pleased to note that the Council responded favourably to our letter of 20 June 2008 (S/2008/418), in which our group requested that a meeting be held on the implementation of the measures set out in the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) and that all interested Member States be invited to participate in the discussion. I shall confine myself to a few general comments, as my colleagues in the S-5 group will make separate statements on specific aspects of the Council's working methods.

Mr. President, you have provided us with an excellent concept paper (S/2008/528, annex). It clearly shows that an increased number of Council decisions require active implementation by all United Nations Member States. For example, sanctions regimes have multiplied, and their implementation has become a costly and complex task for Member States. In addition, the increase in the number of United Nations peacekeeping operations is causing an unprecedented burden in terms of personnel, logistics and financing. It is thus important that non-members of the Council be informed in a timely manner about its deliberations and that they enjoy sufficient access to the Council's decision-making process. That is why I should like to

briefly explain why the S-5 group requested this debate and why we consider it important.

The S-5 group welcomed the submission of the 2006 note by the President of the Security Council and considers it a significant step forward. We acknowledge the progress made thus far. However, we think it is also important to proceed more systematically with the implementation of the note if we wish to further enhance the Council's effectiveness. We believe that, two years after the note's submission, the time has come to take a closer look at what has and has not been accomplished to date. We also believe that a further step should be taken, and we encourage the Council to consider measures beyond those envisaged in the note.

More specifically, we agree with the analyses presented in the concept paper, to which we would like to add the following comments.

The S-5 group welcomes the substantial increase in the number of public meetings. However, they should not serve as a pro forma exercise, while the essential information continues to be shared behind closed doors. We share the view that the Council should better explain why it has chosen a particular format and that it should strive to make the best possible use of various forms of meetings, particularly when acting on issues directly concerning non-members of the Council, which would thus like to be involved at an early stage.

We hope that briefings to non-members on the monthly programme of work will continue to be systematically given by future presidencies. However, we regret that briefings after important consultations are given only on an ad hoc basis and that they continue to depend on the goodwill and the available time of members of a given Mission.

The access of non-Council members to subsidiary bodies has been improved but remains at a very formal level. That is why we invite the Council to explore ways in which directly affected third parties can establish contact and engage in dialogue on specific points with the relevant organs.

Finally, before establishing or renewing a mission's mandate, the Security Council should seek to enhance consultations with Member States deploying civilian and military personnel as well as with significant financial contributors.

In the past, the S-5 group has submitted various additional measures for consideration by the Security Council. Here, I should like to recall some of them: reports to the General Assembly on specific subjects, as well as assessment and analysis of the implementation of Council decisions; additional measures aimed at enhancing the equity of standards for the process of listing and de-listing regarding sanctions; non-use of the veto in the event of genocide, crimes against humanity and grave violations of international humanitarian law; and, finally, announcement in the *Journal of the United Nations* of all meetings of the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, including expert-level meetings.

The S-5 group sincerely hopes that this public debate will not be an isolated event, but will trigger a thorough evaluation of the 2006 note by the President. Such a process could take place as follows. At the end of this open debate, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions could be mandated to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the 2006 note and to involve interested non-members in that review.

Based on its findings, the Working Group could then formulate a set of measures and present them to the Council before the end of 2008. The Council could then convene a follow-up meeting to discuss these recommendations; on the same occasion, the Council could seek the views of the broader membership, in particular on those measures which have a direct impact on non-members of the Council. Finally, the Council could adopt a follow-up note by the President reflecting the progress made and containing new measures to improve its working methods.

The constant evolution of Security Council working methods and their consistent application are in the interest of members and non-members of the Council alike. Therefore, the implementation of the 2006 note requires the sustained commitment of all Council members; non-members should also stay engaged and actively use the platforms of interaction that the Council offers to them. The Small Five group remains fully committed and stands ready to cooperate with the Council in this process.

I would again like to congratulate you, Mr. President on having convened this important meeting, which represents a considerable step in the right direction.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank the representative of Switzerland in particular for having abridged the written version of the declaration.

I now like give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, Mexico welcomes your initiative and that of Belgium of convening a public debate to consider this issue, which is without doubt a fundamental aspect of the process of reforming the Security Council and is of vital importance for all States Members of the United Nations.

Mexico is concerned to observe that, despite the praiseworthy endeavours to implement as regular practice the recommendations in the 63 paragraphs of the annex to document S/2006/507, important elements still remain to be tackled. It is imperative to seek the implementation of all the recommendations and provide ongoing follow-up on Council practices in order to continue enhancing its work. The various elements of the Security Council's daily work need to be reviewed as stated in the annex to the note by the President of the Security Council.

In this vein, Mexico welcomes the fact that significant progress has been made with regard to the transparency of programme of work thanks to "virtual" publication and updating of the Council's programme of work, as well as the dissemination of the monthly forecast.

With regard to the Council meetings and their formats, Mexico is convinced that a higher number of public meetings and briefings should be held in order to keep all Member States informed of what the Council and its subsidiary bodies are doing.

On open debates, it must be recognized that in practice their real utility is questionable, given that we have not seen them yield results in terms of actions or initiatives taken by the Security Council. Similarly, we have not seen prompt follow-up of agreements reached at such debates or their reflection in initiatives prompted by Council members. In this regard, it is imperative to consider again the purpose of holding open debates and to consider their usefulness in the light of the need to make them results-oriented. They should allow true opportunity for participation by States Members of the Organization.

Although some thematic debates have proved extremely interesting, the Council has not given the necessary follow-up to the development of positions and proposals expressed on the various matters under consideration. Here, at least a report should be drawn up which could give rise to specific initiatives.

For Mexico, the question of documentation is relevant if the membership is to be kept updated on decisions and regarding other relevant Security Council information. Mexico believes that the reports of the Secretary-General and the special Secretariat briefings to the Security Council are of particular relevance and a prime source of information about what is going on in the field. Here, my delegation acknowledges the significant progress achieved in the prompt issuance of reports of the Secretary-General, as well as the inclusion of a specific section on the recommendations of those reports. We emphasize how useful they are when it comes to the measures that the Security Council decides to adopt on a given issue.

Mexico is also convinced of the importance of reports by the Security Council presidency. In this regard, we would urge States concluding their Presidency of the Security Council to continue timely reporting on their work so that specific follow-up can be given on issues that continue to be considered in the following months, so that progress can be made and so that specific objectives can be achieved. We welcome the recent meeting convened by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam at the end of his presidency, at which Member States had an opportunity to express their views on the work of the Council.

Mexico recognizes how important it is for the Council to interact with States and cooperate with regional and subregional organizations. My country therefore believes that continued efforts should be made to achieve better cooperation with interested non-members of the Council, as well as with regional organizations, in order to ensure that the problem or conflict in question is addressed in a comprehensive fashion that helps to identify solution.

Similarly, promoting more unofficial consultations with Member States interested or involved in a situation under consideration by the Council, as well as with neighbouring countries and countries that can make particular contributions, is of particular importance in dealing with a given issue. Mexico therefore supports a greater number of

meetings between such actors and the Security Council. We urge that as far as possible a greater variety of meeting formats be used, including Aria Formula meetings.

These measures would be a decisive step towards enhancing the Council's work, dealing with issues threatening international peace and security. They would provide the Council with additional input and would ensure greater participation by the various actors involved in the matters under discussion.

Moreover, Mexico believes that even greater coordination is required among United Nations organs, in particular the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in order to avoid any duplication of work. This could be achieved through better communication among those organs, and by holding periodic meetings among the Presidents of those organs, as indicated in paragraph 51 of document S/2006/507.

On the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, Mexico reaffirms how important it is that the document be less descriptive and more analytical and results-oriented. In particular, my country believes it indispensable that it contain concise information on the work of all the Council's subsidiary bodies, such as the sanctions committees and the Working Group on Documentation, inter alia, as these are integral part of the report.

In order to ensure greater transparency in what the Council's work, Mexico recommends that the report make mention of situations brought to the attention to the Council but on which the Council decided that no action needed to be taken. The reasons for such decision should be indicated. We also believe it is important that the report be published in a timely manner so that Council members have time to thoroughly study it before it is submitted to the General Assembly.

Although we acknowledge the progress made with regard to greater efficiency of the work of the Security Council, much still remains to be done to ensure that the discussions are more lively and transparent. That is certainly a challenge for the Member States and the Secretariat, who must work together in order to overcome the shortcomings that are still in existence here.

Accordingly, Mexico believes that the best way of ensuring greater efficiency is to ensure better coordination between Council members and the Secretariat and better planning of the work, so that non-Council members can know about forthcoming meetings and better prepare their participation, should that prove appropriate.

Mexico firmly believes that the enhancement of the Council's working methods when it comes will lead to improvements in its work and decisions and improve its image in the eyes of the international community and Member States of the Organization. In order to ensure that it is better able to tackle the new threats and challenges to international peace and security and in order to ensure a Security Council that is able to deal with all of its responsibilities, a substantive change to its working methods is imperative and cannot be delayed.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I have the honour of delivering the following statement on behalf of all five Nordic countries, namely, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

First of all, allow me to thank the Belgian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. The group of five small countries (S-5), namely, Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, also deserves praise for its untiring work in maintaining focus on this very important, though less media-friendly, aspect of Security Council reform.

In agreeing to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council, Member States of the United Nations have conferred a tremendous and historically unprecedented amount of power and legitimacy upon a decision-making procedure in which they do not participate directly themselves. It is therefore of utmost importance that the Council, when acting on behalf of all the Member States, take all possible steps to ensure maximum transparency and interaction with Members outside the Council. Furthermore, while the absence of a reform of the Council's membership remains a major gap in the efforts to modernize the United Nations, improving the Council's working methods becomes all the more urgent to secure the necessary transparency, efficiency and interaction among Member States.

The Belgian concept paper underlines the need for a clear understanding of the rationale for the Council's adoption of a specific meeting format. The Nordic countries share this concern and suggest that, when appropriate and clear, the President of the Council could, upon opening the meeting, explain the rationale for choosing the given format.

It is of the highest importance that the Council be kept continually informed on political aspects of issues on its agenda. In this respect, we would welcome regular opportunities for briefings from all parts of the Secretariat. In addition to the welcome briefings from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, we would also like to hear from the Department of Political Affairs and the Peacebuilding Support Office, in order to be briefed on political and peacebuilding perspectives as a complement to the peacekeeping and humanitarian perspectives already being provided.

The regularity and quality of briefings for non-Council members has increased. The ongoing focus on the issue of transparency has made every member of the Security Council aware of the obligation entailed by Security Council membership to keep the wider United Nations membership informed. On the whole, presidential briefings have worked well. But more detailed explanatory briefings should aim to be as inclusive as possible in order to inform all interested countries about developments on issues before the Security Council that might affect them. Iceland, as a small island State, is greatly aware of the challenges faced by the least developed countries and the small island developing States in this regard.

Some years back, members of the Council agreed that interactive wrap-up sessions at the end of a presidency would be useful so as to increase transparency and the availability of information emanating from the Council. Such sessions — some of them held in public — were potential arenas for assessing the Council's contribution and for addressing the issue of lessons learned. Unfortunately, this tradition was discontinued a couple of years ago, and the Nordic countries would like to encourage Council members to take up that practice again. Alternatively, regular reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly, with an assessment by each outgoing presidency, could be instituted.

The annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly should be made as substantial and analytical as possible. The Council could hold an interactive discussion on the annual report when the report is considered by the General Assembly.

Transparency should make it easier for non-Council members that have a real interest in or knowledge of a matter to make a contribution. Such contributions are in the interests of all Member States. In this context, the five Nordic countries would urge the Security Council to take steps, when possible, towards making draft resolutions and presidential statements available to non-Council members as soon as they are introduced in informal consultations of the whole.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the work of the independent website Security Council Report, which has made a major contribution, since its relatively recent creation, to transparency and predictability with regard to the work of the Security Council. The Secretariat is also to be complimented on the improvements it has made to the official Security Council website. The webcasts are also very useful and should be continued and expanded if possible.

We are also convinced that additional improvements are needed in the interaction and information flow between, not only the General Assembly and the Security Council, but also the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, in order to implement the much needed, truly integrated approach to matters related to peace and security. In this regard, we wish to emphasize our continued support for the practice of inviting the chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission to brief the Council on a regular basis.

Interaction with regional organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union has intensified. We welcome the emphasis on regional organizations' increased responsibility and ownership of efforts to solve regional conflicts. At the same time, it is important that this approach take place within the United Nations framework and with the Security Council's support.

Interaction, transparency and legitimacy in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies, particularly the sanctions committees, are paramount in further strengthening the

protection of fundamental rights of individuals and the rule of law. The five Nordic countries would like to recall paragraph 109 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document regarding the necessity of ensuring "fair and clear procedures for placing individuals and entities on sanctions lists and for removing them, as well as granting humanitarian exemptions" (A/RES/60/1, para. 109).

In this regard we welcome the adoption of resolutions 1730 (2006), 1735 (2006) and, most recently, 1822 (2008). Those resolutions constitute important steps in the right direction with regard, inter alia, to transparency towards both States and individuals. Further moves towards truly fair and clear procedures should include the introduction of an independent advisory input to the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), especially with respect to requests for de-listing.

Finally, as the Belgian concept paper points out, efficiency, transparency and interaction are closely intertwined. The Nordic countries will continue to contribute constructively to helping the Security Council function better on all these levels, and Iceland will, if elected to a seat on the Security Council this October, seek to carry forward this important work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Graham (New Zealand): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important open debate, the first on Security Council working methods since 1994. We especially thank you for preparing an excellent concept paper (S/2008/528, annex), which clearly sets out areas where progress has been achieved and other areas where more needs to be done. The working methods of the Security Council — a vital organ in the United Nations system — are of the utmost importance to New Zealand.

For many Member States, especially those that rarely have an opportunity to serve on the Security Council, the working methods have a very considerable impact on our ability to contribute and to understand issues before the Council. Improving the Security Council's working methods is therefore one of the most important areas for reform, and one on which there is a broad measure of agreement.

We note that considerable progress has been made in the implementation of provisions to increase the Council's transparency, efficiency and interaction with non-members of the Council in line with the recommendations of the note by the President contained in document S/2006/507.

New Zealand is grateful to Japan and Slovakia for the work they have done and the leadership they have provided in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions in implementing measures such as a higher rate of public rather than private Council meetings, greater notification of those meetings and regular briefings on the programme of work at the beginning of each presidency.

While progress has been made, there are still areas in which New Zealand would like to see improvement. Specifically, while we note that private consultations are a useful and sometimes necessary mechanism for Council members, public meetings allow the greatest participation and should be used whenever possible. Furthermore, it is vital that essential information be shared at public meetings, not just in closed consultations. A clear rationale for the Council's choice of a particular format for its meetings should be included in the President's opening remarks.

In conjunction with important closed consultations of the Council, we would like to see a systematic process to allow Member States to have input and an exchange of views with Security Council members on issues before the Council that affect them. Although there have been many improvements in that regard, New Zealand would like to see draft statements, draft resolutions and other documents shared systematically with non-members of the Council, perhaps by e-mail to all Missions, sooner and with more frequency. We would also like a format for greater participation by interested parties in the preparation of those documents.

There is also considerable scope to develop the interaction with other interested parties, such as troop-contributing countries, regional organizations, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Finally, there is a need for more effective input to the Council from parts of the Secretariat, such as the Department for Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In terms of next steps, we agree with the statement made by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the group of five small nations that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions could be charged with reviewing the implementation of the 2006 presidential note and looking at the proposals made in today's debate. The Working Group could then present its findings and recommendations to the Security Council before the end of this year. The Council could hold a follow-up meeting, making sure to include the views of the wider membership and potentially adopting a follow-up presidential note that reflects the progress made and outlines areas where further specific improvements have been proposed.

New Zealand welcomes the ongoing commitment of the Security Council to enhancing the efficiency and transparency of its work and to implementing the measures contained in the presidential note. We now look forward to the Council's delivering on that commitment and to actively engaging with the wider United Nations community on this issue in the coming months.

Finally, may I reiterate our thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): I would like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this debate. Given the lateness of the hour, I promise the interpreters and others that I will be as brief as possible. I would also like to thank those who have spoken before me. Every intervention I have heard contained good and valuable ideas with which we strongly agree and of which we have taken careful note. I would also like to acknowledge the important role that Japan has played, and to thank Costa Rica, Jordan, Lichtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland for the burden they have taken on in advancing this issue. While Security Council reform in general has been stuck, some modest improvements in the Council's working methods have been achieved. We encourage more work in that regard.

Australia has not been on the Council for over 20 years, but we have been a contributor to many peacekeeping operations mandated by this body. Of course, as a Member we are bound by its decisions. We therefore believe that the basic mindset of the Council should be one of active accountability and deliberate transparency. Let me offer a few brief thoughts on what that might mean in practice. More details can be found in the printed copy of Australia's intervention.

First, the Council has an image problem. Outside of this building, and perhaps even outside the Chamber, and certainly in many capitals and among the wider public, it is regarded as a bit of a closed club doing good where it can but regularly and jealously guarding its privileges and specific interests. That image is not going to change overnight. Real change will require substantive reform but, as I think all statements up to now have emphasized, the reform of working methods can help. A good start would be for the Council to formally state that it has an objective and that that objective is to be like any modern effective organization: to be accountable and transparent.

Secondly, we believe that reliable progress can only be made if one measures what one does. How much of the Council's work is done behind closed doors? As others have asked, how much of it should be done behind closed doors? How soon are newly elected Council members brought into deliberations? How often are resolutions drafted ahead of open debates and what, if any, changes are made as a consequence of those debates? What percentage of the drafting recommendations of the 10 elected members or non-members of the Council are ever accepted? As we have been reminded, some Council Presidents have done very well in maximizing transparency and access by non-members — and we are grateful for that — but have all?

The Council should keep those sorts of statistics and issue them periodically — say, every two years — so that we can know if we are making progress or not. I note that the representative of Croatia cited some performance statistics in his intervention. We should do more of that, and information should be more readily available. Self-assessment can be useful and necessary but, equally, an external assessor is not a bad idea. The work of one external organization mentioned a few moments ago by a previous speakers — Security Council Report — illustrates the value of external auditing. That is a body very well and ably led by someone very well known to many of us. He is a gentleman who participated in the last debate on this issue, back in 1994. Nineteen ninety-four: as we in Australia say, that is a long time between drinks.

One of the most compelling ideas I have heard today was raised by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica. He said that his delegation advocates

> "for periodic open debates on these issues every two years, so that each elected member can have at least one opportunity, during its tenure of membership of the Council, to debate the working methods of this organ" (*supra*).

That is a good idea. We should just do it.

I would also like to echo Indonesia's call for greater use of web-based information technology, not just to disseminate information but also to gather inputs on less controversial matters from a wider pool of expertise.

Finally, we non-members should also reflect on our own performance. Too often we turn up at open debates and merely read out what our capitals have sent us, rather than responding to the interventions that have gone before and that have been the product of very careful consideration.

On those occasions when we are invited to open debates, as noted by the United States delegation, we often fail to turn up. We ignore time limits, and we do not avail ourselves of the opportunity, as we are frequently reminded by the President, to shorten our statements and distribute longer written texts. In short, we can all do better, and we need to.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Australia for having condensed the written version of his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Uruguay would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on convening this thematic debate today in the Council. It has made it possible for us to listen to the views of many delegations for whom the working methods of the Council is a matter of great importance. We say this in the firm belief that for small countries, those of us who can hope to sit on the Council only after long periods off of it — indeed some delegation has calculated that our period on the Council was likely to fall every 50 to 99 years — the participation of non-members of the Council must be treated as a fundamental right of Member States. They have the right to participate in negotiations and decision-making by the Organization's bodies, in particular when they have a direct interest in the outcome of discussions and when those outcomes affect their citizens or their highest aims. Believe me, even some of the smallest countries, such as Uruguay, have, throughout the Organization's existence, shown a firm determination to meet the obligations of the Charter and thus require the full exercise of their rights in every forum.

We have another general concern that we would like to express before turning to some of the specific thematic issues concerning the work of the Council: when members discuss the matter of enhancing the working methods of the Council, this is immediately linked to the issue of reform of the membership of the Council, as if those were two matters that were indissolubly linked. But they are two matters that have been inexplicably linked. They cannot serve as a joint basis for negotiations. Some time ago, a group of countries presented a draft General Assembly resolution, A/60/L.49, which contained worthy suggestions and proposals that could be endorsed today by the vast majority of Members. The treatment given this worthwhile proposal by some delegations has been, if I may say so, almost mean, because in reality, they allowed the issue of the Council's working methods to turn into a discussion on the expansion of the Council, which is a difficult matter, and almost completely intractable because of its very nature.

Among the matters mentioned in the President's concept paper and others we have debated over the years on the subject, there are some of particular interest to Uruguay, and I would like to comment on them briefly.

With regard to consultations with troop-contributing countries, we wish to reiterate the need for troop-contributing countries to be fully informed of fundamental developments in the relevant missions. We welcome the improvements that have been implemented with regard to better communication between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. However, the meetings that are currently held are merely informative in nature. We cannot say that there is any real consultation with the troop-contributing countries. Rather, in general, those countries are informed of decisions that have already been taken by Council members or by the Secretariat. We, the contributing countries, would like to have a real opportunity to express our views in such instances, in particular when changes to mandates are under

discussion, as those can have consequences for the safety and security of national contingents, equipment and new configurations in the field of the forces in question or for evacuations of troop contingents. It would be appropriate for meetings with troop-contributing countries to be held with sufficient notice, to ensure that the consultations held can indeed be reflected in the decisions adopted by the Council.

Subsidiary bodies of the Council should permit interested Member States to participate in their discussions, in particular in the case of the sanctions committees. It should be possible for those States with concerns regarding sanctions regimes to participate, so that effective and timely consultations can be held, pursuant to Article 50 of the Charter, with the relevant sanctions committee.

We acknowledge that the improvements implemented in the sanctions regime by the Council have been steps forward towards an improvement in the functioning of the varied and complex subsidiary organs of the Council. But there is still a real lack of direct access to appeal bodies, and there is no real system for consultations in which countries could participate with a reasonable expectation of seeing their interests taken into account and of influencing, with a view to advancing those interests, organizational developments in each case. In addition, we acknowledge what has been done to clarify the committees' rules for listing and de-listing. We urge the Council to continue to work on that matter and provide maximum guarantees in that regard.

We do not wish to repeat the criticisms that we have previously expressed on other matters, such as on the Council's report to the General Assembly, or on the need to undertake reforms aimed at achieving final approval of the rules of procedure of the Council. We have made those views clear, and we wish to conclude on a positive note, looking to the future with optimism.

Let us once again consider the spirit of General Assembly draft resolution A/60/L.49. We have already approved a plethora of measures making it possible to enhance the working methods of the Council without waiting for a reform of the size and composition of the Council because, again, we believe that those two matters are independent, and on one of them, the reform of the Council's methods, there is agreement in principle.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mrs. Núñez Mordoche (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 118 States members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Movement considers the convening of this open debate a step in the right direction, almost 15 years since the last one held by the Security Council on its working methods. We sincerely hope that this will be the first step towards regular and comprehensive consideration by the Council of this important issue, duly taking into account the views of non-member States.

The Movement reiterates that the reform of the Council should not be confined only to the question of the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, but that it should also address substantive issues relating to the Council's agenda, working methods and decision-making processes.

The note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2006/507 describes some measures aimed at enhancing the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work and at promoting interaction and dialogue with States not members of this organ.

NAM considers that some improvements have been made in the working methods of the Council, including in the implementation of some of the measures described in the aforementioned note. However, those are clearly not enough, leaving much room for improvement.

Transparency, openness and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures. Regrettably, the Council has neglected those important factors on numerous occasions.

Such instances include unscheduled open debates with selective notification, reluctance in convening open debates on some issues of high significance, frequent restrictions on the participation in some of the debates and discrimination between members and non-members of the Council, particularly with regard to sequencing and time limits of statements during the open debates, failure to submit special reports to the General Assembly, as required under Article 24 of the Charter, the submission of annual reports still lacking

sufficient information and analytical content, and lack of minimal parameters for the drawing up of the monthly assessment by the Security Council presidencies.

The Council must comply with the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter, which allow any non-Council member to participate in discussions on matters affecting it. Rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council should be thoroughly observed. Closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum and as the exception they were meant to be.

The Movement also reiterates the need to reform and democratize the decision-making processes of the Council, including limiting and curtailing the use of the veto, with a view to its eventual elimination.

NAM requests the Security Council to take the following immediate actions to improve its working methods, many of which have so far not been considered by the Council and are not included in presidential note in document S/2006/507. It is necessary to increase the number of public meetings, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, and to ensure that those meetings provide real opportunities to take into account the views and contributions of all the Member States of the United Nations, particularly the interests of non-Council members whose issues are under discussion in the Council; to allow briefings by the Special Envoys or Representatives of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Secretariat to take place in public meetings, unless in exceptional circumstances; and to enhance further its relationship with the United Nations Secretariat and troop-contributing countries (TCCs), including through sustained, regular and timely interaction. Meetings with TCCs should be held not only to draw up mandates, but also in their implementation when considering a change in, renewal of or termination of a mission mandate, or when there is a rapid deterioration of the situation on the ground. In that context, the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should involve TCCs more frequently and intensively in its deliberations, especially in the very early stages of mission planning.

It is also essential to uphold the primacy of and respect for the Charter of the United Nations in connection with the Council's functions and powers. NAM stresses once again that the decision by the Security Council to initiate formal or informal discussions on the situation in any Member State of the United Nations or any issue that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

It is necessary to establish the Council's subsidiary organs in accordance with the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter. Those organs should function in a manner that would provide adequate and timely information on their activities to the general United Nations membership. In that context, countries that are not members of the Council should be given access to its subsidiary organs, including the right to participate, as appropriate. Resort to Chapter VII of the Charter as a mechanism to address issues that do not necessarily pose a threat to international peace and security should be avoided. The provisions of other relevant Chapters, where appropriate, including Chapters VI and VIII, should be invoked before invoking Chapter VII, which should be a measure of last resort, if necessary.

It is also essential to submit a more comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the work of the Council, including cases in which the Council has failed to act, as well as the views expressed by its members during the consideration of the agenda items under its consideration. Pursuant to Articles 15 (1) and 24 (3) of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council should submit special reports for the consideration of the General Assembly and ensure that its monthly assessments are comprehensive, analytical and issued in a timely fashion. The Council should also take into account fully the recommendations of the General Assembly on matters relating to international peace and security, consistent with Article 11 (2) of the Charter. The Council must involve more closely States concerned in discussions on matters affecting them, in accordance with article 31 of the Charter and ensure that the views of Member States, obtained through public debates on cross-cutting thematic issues, are reflected in relevant resolutions and presidential statements adopted thereafter, instead of the current practice of adopting resolutions and presidential statements without reference to such discussions. Finally, the Council should formalize the rules of procedure of the Council, which have remained provisional for more than 60 years, in order to improve the Council's transparency and accountability.

NAM reiterates its concern over the increasing and continuing encroachment by the Council on issues that clearly fall within the functions and powers of other main bodies of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies. The Security Council must fully observe all the provisions of the Charter, as well as all General Assembly resolutions, that clarify its relationship with the latter organ and other principal organs.

Close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs are indispensable in order to enable the United Nations to remain relevant and capable of meeting the existing, new and emerging threats and challenges. In that context, NAM reiterates its call on the Presidents of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to meet periodically to discuss and to coordinate among themselves regarding the issues on their agendas and the programmes of work of the respective principal organs they represent, in order to establish increased coherence and complementarity among those organs in a mutually reinforcing manner, respectful of each others' mandates, and with a view to generating a mutual understanding among them.

The President (*spoke in French*)**:** Since I still have a number of speakers on my list who have not yet taken the floor and given the lateness of the hour, I would suggest, with the consent of Council members, that we suspend the meeting once we have heard the statements by the representatives of Brazil and Jordan, and to reconvene at 3 p.m. Do Council members consent to that proposal?

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): The decision to hold this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council indicates a growing understanding of the need to make the body more transparent and accessible to non-members and, therefore, more effective. The positive response to widespread expressions of interest in the work of the Council is certainly to be encouraged. My delegation also wishes to express appreciation for the efforts of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland to promote today's debate. Brazil supports their continued efforts related to this issue, as well as many of the concrete proposals and ideas that they have presented in the past.

Both the justifications for that interest and the political guidance for consideration of the issue before us are found in the Charter. Article 2 incorporates the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, and Article 24 establishes that the Council acts on behalf of all Members on matters regarding international peace and security. The latter provision, as interpreted and implemented in the light of the principle of sovereign equality, implies that the quite exceptional authority given to this organ entails the obligation of accountability to those on whose behalf the Council acts. Therefore, transparency to and interaction with all Member States, as appropriate, are imperatives arising from the Charter itself.

In giving concrete meaning to those imperatives, every possible measure should be taken to ensure that relevant information is adequately provided to non-members and that their inputs are obtained in a timely manner and seriously considered by the Council in its decision-making process. Progress has been made in pursuing those goals, and credit must be given to several delegations that have been particularly keen to hold the Council accountable to all Member States, in accordance with the Charter.

However, as indicated in the concept paper prepared for this debate (S/2008/528, annex), further progress is needed in implementing or consolidating the implementation of measures to which Council members have already committed. Some examples are: substantive and detailed briefings to non-members shortly after informal consultations of the whole; the sharing of draft resolutions and draft presidential statements, as appropriate, as soon as they have been introduced within informal consultations of the whole; meaningful communication with Member States that are parties to a conflict and/or with other interested and affected parties; and a preference for the holding of open meetings, particularly at an early stage in the consideration of a matter.

Brazil views the discussion on the working methods of the Security Council as intrinsically linked to a meaningful change in the Council's composition and therefore in its structure: the two aspects of reform must go hand in hand. Just as transparency and accountability cannot take deep root in a Council that is insufficiently representative of a diverse membership and that does not reflect contemporary political realities, an enlarged Council will need new working methods in order to become fully accountable. It is not

politically realistic to expect to meaningfully and permanently alter the Council's working methods without expanding its composition. It is no coincidence that no progress has been made on either aspect of Council reform since the mid-1990s.

That is one of the reasons why Brazil believes that intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform must commence without delay or preconditions and on an inclusive basis, in accordance with the Charter. It is also one of the reasons why Council expansion must take place in both membership categories. A larger number of non-permanent members would increase the possibilities for small countries to participate in the work of the organ. By the same token, the addition of new permanent members that are able and willing to contribute to peace and security and to promote greater Council openness to non-members would strengthen initiatives promoting enhanced accountability to the membership. It is therefore essential to adopt an integrated approach to Security Council reform, one that reinforces the mutual support that the two aspects — working methods and composition — can provide to each other.

We very much hope that those considerations, as well as the wealth of ideas to be communicated by other delegations in today's debate, will be duly reflected upon by the Council and thus that they will prove to be useful to this organ in its efforts to increase the involvement of non-members in its work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Al-Allaf (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for your swift favourable response to the request of the group of five small States — the Small Five group — that this meeting be held to consider the Security Council's working methods. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the Small Five group.

I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for your concept paper for this meeting (S/2008/528, annex), which presents a forward-looking vision that forms the basis for our open debate. At the time of its publication, we recognized the importance of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) and of the Council's implementation of the recommendations it sets out. We must also recognize the fact that there continue to be many areas in which no progress has been made. That gives additional importance to our work today and opens the way for new vision and new ideas regarding ways to improve the Council's working methods.

Today, the scope of Security Council resolutions is unlimited. Their impact has been expanded over the past few years to affect the entire membership of the Organization on a large number of issues, including, inter alia, counter-terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, sanctions, human rights, peacekeeping operations and children and armed conflict. In that connection, the breadth of their impact should be matched with comprehensive engagement. That would not only enable us to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the Council's work in implementing its resolutions, but would also ensure commitment, a swift and positive response and superior performance on the part of all States in attaining the Council's ultimate objective of maintaining international peace and security.

Since my country, Jordan, is among the largest contributors of troops to peacekeeping operations, I shall focus on improving the Council's working methods in the area of peacekeeping operations, in particular enhancing the interaction between Security Council members and troop-contributing countries and promoting consultation between them.

In recent decades, the international security environment has undergone drastic changes that have transformed the nature of peacekeeping operations and the ways in which they are planned, managed and implemented. Those drastic changes require new and effective kinds of responses on the part of the international community. By necessity, the response of the troop-contributing countries, including Jordan, to current challenges to international peace and security is part and parcel of the response of the international community. The troop-contributing countries continue to be seen as an asset — a source of forces for peacekeeping missions. Jordan considers that troop-contributing countries should be dealt with on the basis of a true partnership in an international response to crisis. The only way to bring about such a strategic change is to improve the working methods of the Security Council.

Considerations that are of great interest to the troop-contributing countries — and their motivations — include the following. First is the safety and security of

troops and equipment and the question of whether security conditions are conducive to carrying out the tasks to be accomplished under Council resolutions. Consultations with troop-contributing countries are vital not only to establish an appropriate security environment before the deployment of forces, but also to facilitate the decisions taken by the Governments concerned.

Secondly, participation by the Permanent Missions of troop-contributing countries in the strategic evaluation of the situation in a conflict area, even if it is being carried out under the direction of the Security Council, would enable us to develop strategic options that are more comprehensive and not limited to the current tasks of the mission, but to include future phases of the force deployment and the United Nations presence in the host country.

Thirdly, risk assessment is very important. Such assessments are undertaken by the Secretariat under the direction of the Council and aim at achieving coordination and harmonization between the mandate imposed by the Council and the resources provided by the troop-contributing countries. The credibility of the national forces of those troop-contributing countries and their ability to implement the task is based, to a large extent, on that coordination. The Permanent Missions of the troop-contributing countries could, at this stage, contribute greatly to providing and evaluating credible alternatives.

Fourthly, early consultations on the impact of making adjustments to the mission with a view to achieving a specific goal, whether by increasing or decreasing troop levels, amending the mission, amending the tools or means at its disposal, or ending its mandate because of political or emergency developments, would help countries to deal with the impact of those changes and adapt to them.

From my previous experience as a military observer in peacekeeping operations and as one of the former planners of Jordanian participation in peacekeeping operations, I must state here that we in Jordan consider the resolution adopted by the Council concerning any given peacekeeping operation as the fundamental, principal reference point for preparing our forces to join and engage in peacekeeping operations. The main point here is that the resolution is the final result of a long planning process undertaken under the direction of this Council and mostly in isolation from any effective, methodical or effective contribution of troop-contributing countries. That is a result of the fact that the priorities and evaluations of those troop-contributing countries are taken into account at a later stage, after the adoption of a resolution by the Council. We therefore call for the promotion of consultations between Council members and troop-contributing countries in the formulation of Council resolutions and presidential statements concerning those operations. We urge the members of this Council to provide troop-contributing countries with the draft texts of such resolutions or presidential statements at an early stage, if the sponsor of the resolution believes that is possible. Such a contribution to the process will promote the transparency called for in the work of the Council and help us to explain those resolutions to our Governments.

We believe that the burden of making full use of the opportunity to interact with the Council within its regular consultations and meetings falls on the troop-contributing countries. The current nature of such meetings restricts our effective and active participation and does not lead to the results that we all look forward to. It would be better for the Council to encourage discussions with troop-contributing countries in accordance with resolution 1353 (2001), and we encourage the presence of military and political experts in the participating missions at the earliest stage, before the consideration of those matters.

We hope that the Council will continue to encourage the representatives of the Secretary-General to attend those meetings, provide briefings and interact with troop-contributing countries. We attach special importance to the timing of those meetings, so that they can be announced at an early stage as often as possible and not on the eve of the adoption of a resolution or at a later period, after its adoption. Consultations with troop-contributing countries are an essential matter in helping the Governments of those States to take the decision to participate in peacekeeping missions.

Because we welcome the holding of this meeting, we hope that this open debate will not be a single and isolated event, that the Council will continue to engage positively and interact with the wider membership of the United Nations, and that, at the end of this dialogue, we will continue to make progress on the working methods of the Council. We hope that the measures presented by the representative of

Switzerland in that respect will be followed up on and accorded special attention.

My delegation sincerely urges the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to take into account the results of this open debate in its upcoming meetings. I welcome this open debate and emphasize the fact that Jordan is committed to positively participating in peacekeeping operations in service of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): As previously agreed, I would now like to suspend our work. We will reconvene at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5968 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5968th meeting

Wednesday, 27 August 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Elgannas
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Ms. Donova
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Fawcett
	United States of America	Ms. Willson
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507)

Letter dated 4 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-49242 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have just received a letter from the representative of Poland, in which he asks to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Herczyński (Poland) took a seat at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Egypt, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to the Member States of the group of five small countries (S5) for their initiative to request the convening of a special meeting of the Security Council to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the measures set out in the annex to the note of the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2006/507 of 19 July 2006. I would like also to thank you, Mr. President, for preparing the concept paper dated 4 August 2008 which helps direct the discussion towards a purposeful evaluation that might lead to the adoption of specific measures. I would like in this regard to express our support for the statement made by Cuba on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the central starting point in any effort to promote the efficiency of the Security Council is to enhance the transparency and accountability of its work, with a view to guaranteeing that the Council carry out the mandates given to it by the Member States of this Organization and to treating permanent and non-permanent members equally, as they have been elected not to protect their national interests but to protect the international and regional interests of the general membership of the Organization as a whole.

There is also no doubt that today's debate is inextricably linked to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The subject of reform of the Council's working methods is a main part of the Open-ended Working Group's activities, along with the expansion in the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership in the Council, guaranteeing that the new permanent members are accorded the veto right on an equal footing with current permanent members.

While we welcome the series of notes issued by the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, we must candidly admit that the measures contained therein do not meet the expectations of Member States, as those measures constitute compromises agreed to by non-permanent Member States in order to show what can be called Council unity. Therefore, the revision of these measures, as proposed in the report under discussion today, does not convince us that such a revision constitutes the final word in the institutional handling of the issue. Rather, the proposed revision stands as an insufficient preliminary step that needs further evaluation and strengthening.

Reform of the working methods of the Security Council should be based on the inevitability of achieving real balance in power among Council members, particularly between the permanent and non-permanent members. Furthermore, the time has come, for an agreement on permanent rules of procedure to replace the current provisional rules, which have been in force for more than 60 years, namely, since the establishment of the Organization.

Furthermore, the Informal Working Group dealing with this important subject in the Council should be transformed into a formal working group that would adopt official bold procedures to consolidate the concepts of equality among countries and of justice in dealing with their issues, enhance transparency,

increase interaction and promote efficiency. There is no doubt that the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly will remain the most appropriate forum to deal with this matter in a democratic manner, as the Assembly encompasses all Members of the Organization.

Egypt is convinced that the starting point in reforming the Council's working methods is for the Council to refrain from exceeding the mandates entrusted to it under the Charter of the United Nations. The Council should stop encroaching on subjects falling squarely within the core competence of the Organization's other main organs, particularly the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, under the pretext of dealing with the security aspects of those subjects or by attempting to give a false impression that the subject matter under consideration gives rise to a threat to international peace and security. This issue stresses the importance of revisiting the relationship between the Security Council and the other principal organs of the Organization for the purposes of restoring the institutional balance between them that is clearly outlined in the Charter. In this regard, the International Court of Justice has a major role to play in settling any dispute that might arise between organs with respect to their mandates.

Moreover, Security Council respect for objectivity, as well as its obligation to avoid selectivity, double standards or politicization, constitutes some of the main keys to achieving real reform in the working methods of the Council. This notion could find its practical application in giving concerned countries the opportunity to attend informal Council consultations on the same footing as that afforded representatives of the Secretary General, and giving them and the regional organizations the chance to participate in Council negotiations that might have an impact on them. Concerned countries should also be allowed to participate in the evaluation of the implementation of Council resolutions that affect them as well as in the examination of reasons why that implementation might be hindered. Such an assessment should be included in the annual report prepared by the Council and submitted to the General Assembly. That report, which is currently of a narrative character, must be made more analytical and explanatory as regards positions on the various issues being dealt with by the Council. It must also include the reasons for the Council's refraining from certain actions and for its inability to take decisive action in certain situations, in particular those related to the maintenance of international peace and security. Moreover, the report must include explanations for the Council's various responses vis-à-vis its resolutions, presidential and press statements and reports, including the criteria followed by the Council in deciding how to respond.

The working methods of the Council will not be reformed unless we effectively address the misuse of the right of veto and take the necessary measures to restrict and rationalize its use until it is eliminated altogether. That should be done in order to halt its misuse, putting pressure on concerned countries to accept specific solutions and preventing the Council from acting in certain cases. It should also be done in order to prevent the veto from being used in cases of proven genocide, crimes against humanity and grave violations of international humanitarian law, as well as in efforts to halt hostilities between warring parties. Pending its elimination, all new permanent members in an expanded Security Council must enjoy the right of veto, in particular new members from the African continent. Those countries have experienced historical injustice owing to the fact that they have not been represented in the permanent category.

Past experience has shown the growing role that can be played by regional groups and organizations — especially the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Conference — in support of the Security Council in carrying out its duties. During its presidency of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in December 2006, Egypt put forward an initiative to establish a coordination and consultation mechanism between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. That important initiative, which was welcomed and is currently being implemented, could serve as a groundbreaking model to widen the scope of coordination so as to include other regional groups and organizations that play an important role in maintaining international peace and security.

In conclusion, our debate today is an important step towards reaching agreement on measures needed to reform the working methods of the Security Council. There have been several worthwhile efforts in that regard. The most recent of those was General Assembly draft resolution A/60/L.49, which was submitted by the group of five small nations in March 2006. That was a good

attempt, despite the fact that the draft resolution did not fully meet the aspirations of Member States with regard to this issue. In addition to the draft resolution, hundreds of other proposals have been put forward on the same subject. What is missing is not additional proposals or evaluations, but more political will on the part of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council alike to achieve real reform of the Security Council. That reform must also encompass the five main areas being dealt with by the Open-ended Working Group — namely, membership, the right of veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Security Council and the reform of the working methods of the Council — so as to be able to achieve a comprehensive agreement on all aspects of the Council's reform in order to make it more effective, transparent and capable of achieving the aspirations of Member States in a world that is stable and peaceful.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Ms. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the President of the Security Council and Permanent Representative of Belgium for this opportunity to engage in an open discussion of the nature and operational effectiveness of the Security Council and its cooperation with States that are not members of the Council.

We are pleased to note that there has been some progress in improving the Council's working methods. The recent debate in the General Assembly of the Security Council's annual report to the Assembly, which was presented by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, was an unprecedented and historic step in improving the cooperation of the Council with non-members of the Council.

We, the members of the international community, continue to support the Security Council in carrying out its major function of maintaining peace and security, which has been assigned to it by the Charter. We are entitled to expect greater effectiveness from the Council in that area. However, the Security Council's effectiveness problem continues to be in the world's spotlight. Today, we are seeing how frequently the Security Council fails to adequately react to serious challenges that directly threaten international peace and security. The Council has repeatedly shown itself to be unable to agree on press statements, let alone on the development of a common position on certain topics of critical importance to the entire international community. Against that backdrop, one gets the impression that problems evidently exist within the Security Council itself, as well as with its working methods. The issue of drastic and prompt reform of the Security Council is therefore a pressing one.

As long as the Council is unable to find common ground in its approaches to certain debatable issues, the world will continue to face military conflicts that are followed by tragic humanitarian consequences. In such cases we should perhaps consider strengthening the cooperation mechanism between the General Assembly and the Security Council. By definition, the General Assembly is a more democratic body that represents the interests of all Member States. In particular, the most crucial disputes to have gone unresolved in the Security Council could be discussed in the General Assembly in order to at least clarify the opinions and positions of the majority of the international community on critical issues, so that those views can be considered during the adoption of Security Council resolutions.

We should acknowledge that the number of open meeting of the Security Council has recently increased, while the number of closed sessions has decreased. Yet the transparency of such meetings leaves much to be desired. For example, States that are not members of the Security Council are forced to spend more time searching for information in any way they can. As a result, they learn either too late or not at all about closed consultations. Every so often, information becomes partially available from interviews of Security Council members given to journalists who cover the proceedings of the Council for the general public.

We non-member States of the Security Council have the right to know first-hand what are the possible decisions being discussed within the Council and what are the positions of each Council member on current issues, and should not have to find this out through the prism of the mass media. Complete knowledge of the nature of internal developments in the Council, which are important for the entire international community, are of critical importance for our Governments, which depend upon objective information in adopting decisions. As concerned members of the international community, we believe that we have the right to be informed. In that connection, regular analysis of positions, especially those of the elected members of the Security Council, will assist us in drawing conclusions as regards providing future support only to

States that are capable of being responsible for the maintenance of peace and security.

We believe that that approach will strengthen the authority of the Security Council, increase the public's trust in it and contribute to the Council's effective fulfilment of its major function of maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your initiative to hold this debate. We believe that such a step required political resolve and professional daring. Document S/2006/507 was a milestone in improving the working methods of the Security Council and, above all, in increasing its transparency. Every good initiative must have someone promoting it. Without that, even the most promising ideas can fade away before they produce results. We would therefore also like to express our gratitude to the delegation of Japan for its initiative, as well as to recognize its particular role in improving the working methods of the Council.

That document is clearly useful from the point of view of practicality. Since its adoption, we have seen positive changes in the work of the Council. At the same time, though, we do see a need and an opportunity for further improvement in the internal working methods of the Security Council.

In that regard, my delegation has two practical proposals. First, we propose providing for, in addition to what exists, a new format of meetings, one that is closed to the press and NGOs but is open to delegations. It is not always possible to inform delegations of the time and format of a Council meeting in time for them to prepare written communications requesting to participate. That new format would be particularly useful in the case of urgent meetings, in which, in fact, Member States are particularly interested. Enabling all interested delegations to participate without the need for additional written communications would also remove the concern of Member States over selective information with respect to meetings being planned.

Secondly, we propose separating in time open meetings of the Council and the adoption of decisions on their outcomes. The current practice of organizing open meetings does not even provide for the formal opportunity to take into account the viewpoints expressed during the discussions. Documents on the outcomes of open meetings are prepared ahead of those meetings and are adopted immediately, without any adjustments based on the results of the discussion. Essentially, States that are not Council members have the right to address the Council but, in theory, no opportunity to have any impact on a decision of the Council. Additional work within the Council, based on the outcomes of open meetings, could reflect the results of the discussion and ideas specific to the initiatives in the documents of the Council; it would provide genuine, and not just nominal, evidence of the Council's greater openness.

As was noted in the statement by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which we fully support, the issue of the working methods of the Security Council goes beyond the framework of establishing an internal working method and steps to work openly. An important component of the working methods is also the means to determine the area of responsibility and a mechanism by which decisions are taken. A key prerequisite for improving the work of the Council is to establish within it an atmosphere of self-discipline and responsibility in terms of defining the competencies of the Council. That has to do with establishing an environment, in which Council members agree that they are simply not entitled to hold a formal or informal discussion on the situation in a Member State or on other issues where there is no direct threat to international peace and security.

Lastly is the avoidance of double standards in decision-making — regardless of whether it occurs consciously or not. We need to avoid hasty or incomplete assessments when we should meticulously seek the truth and compromise, and we need to avoid the demonization of opponents. That would certainly enhance the role of the Council in resolving international conflicts and would serve to enhance the effectiveness of its efforts. When working out and adopting decisions, it is important that they be genuine and not just words, and that they take into account the views and concerns of all Member States, be they rank-and-file members of the General Assembly or permanent members of the Council, and particularly Members whose interests are directly affected.

Non-permanent Council members play a particular role in ensuring the most effective, honest and impartial analysis of pressing international issues. As was shown by the Council's work during the events in the hot month of August, it is the action or inaction of non-permanent Council members as a kind of jury or independent arbiters, in particular in a situation where there is no agreement among permanent members, that is the key to whether the Council will be able fully, impartially and objectively to carry out its functions or not.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Ney (Germany): Let me express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening and preparing this useful debate during your presidency. Your recent concept paper (S/2008/528), in particular, has been very helpful and merits our praise. It provides a concise overview of where the Council stands in its efforts to implement the 63 measures set out more than two years ago. We also fully support the approach you have suggested for today's debate, that is to focus on those measures of great interest and relevance to non-Council members in the fields of transparency, interaction and efficiency.

As a staunch proponent of Security Council reform, Germany welcomes the ongoing discussion on the Council's working methods and appreciates the open format that the Belgian presidency has chosen for that purpose. We would also like to thank the group of five small countries — Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland — for their continued commitment to this significant issue.

Let me also thank the former chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions for their efforts, as well as the present chair Ambassador Arias.

As the United Nations increasingly accepts responsibility for conflict resolution around the world, both between and within States, the face of the Council has dramatically changed. Its role has become ever more prominent in recent years. Take but a short look at the tremendous increase in the number of meetings it has held and resolutions it has adopted. Now that the United Nations Member States and the world watch with growing interest, transparency, more than ever, is of paramount importance if the Council is to meet expectations. We, therefore, welcome the progress thus far achieved in that field. Regular briefings by the presidency to non-Council members at the beginning of each month, for example, nowadays provide a useful forecast of and information about the monthly programme of work. Allow me to remark, Mr. President , that you set a very good example in that respect when you assumed the presidency of the Security Council at the beginning of this month.

With regard to enhanced interaction with and involvement of non-Council members, we strongly support the notion that affected parties should have facilitated access to the Council. That should include first and foremost Member States that have a vested interest in the item on the agenda under discussion, such as major troop-contributing countries and financial contributing countries, for instance. At the next stage, however, it may be fruitful to consider improved access to stakeholders other than Member States as well. Such direct consultations may provide the Council with a sounder basis for and increased legitimacy of its decisions. Interaction should also be strengthened within the United Nations, for example between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

It should be noted, however, that such considerations must not undermine efforts to make the working of the Council more efficient. Keeping in mind that statements in public meetings definitely need to be shorter, as you, Mr. President, so aptly pointed out in your concept paper (S/2008/528), I shall limit myself to one more aspect that is central to the German position.

Previous achievements to improve the Council's working methods are laudable, and further efforts are essential in times of the tremendous increase in the prominence of this body. And yet, those efforts cannot be but small steps. Let us not lose sight of our actual goal: comprehensive Security Council reform. Let us continue to regard working methods as one, albeit a significant, aspect in a much wider context. Let us embrace today's debate as an important step in our endeavour to make the Council more transparent, interactive and efficient, but also more legitimate, representative and reflective of today's political realities.

To conclude, let me affirm Germany's strong support for any efforts aimed at improving working methods. They send a clear message by the United

Nations membership that comprehensive Security Council reform is urgently required. Improving working methods alone will not bring about the necessary change. We must address the fundamental issue — the necessity to bring the Security Council in line with the political realities of today's world. If we were to improve working methods without reforming Security Council structures, we would risk increasing the political frustration in large parts of the membership and eroding the authority of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Cheok (Singapore): I too would like to express appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the convening of this open debate in the Security Council. There is always some sensitivity when it comes to discussing the Council's working methods, so we are especially grateful to you for this opportunity. Obviously, my delegation also aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the group of five small countries — the S-5 group. That said, I would like to make some additional comments that focus primarily on the question of access.

Let me begin by stressing that the S-5 should not be seen as an adversary. The group's aim is not to grandstand or to undermine the Council; it is the opposite. It is about trying to make the Security Council more consultative and consistent, so as to get more buy-in from non-members. We recognize the Council's crucial role and its grave responsibilities. We also see that the Council has made many positive changes in its working methods, and we are very grateful for that. We can only commend the successive Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions — Japan, Slovakia and Panama — for their tireless efforts in that regard. The note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) is another example of the Council's engagement on the issue of working methods. But the question is whether the reforms are sufficient and whether they are institutionalized to the point where there can be no backsliding. Naturally, we in the S-5 group feel that the Security Council could go further.

There remain questions of access, many of which have been referred to by previous speakers this morning and this afternoon. States that are primary protagonists on various issues addressed by the Security Council do not always have the opportunity to speak and express their points of view in Council meetings. And even when it is decided that meetings will be open, those decisions often come so late that States are unable to prepare properly to make substantive contributions to the debate. Perhaps one suggestion would be to establish an agreed time frame for concluding negotiations on the format — ideally, 48 hours before the debate — in order to give involved States the opportunity to prepare.

Questions about access also extend to informal consultations, to which you yourself, Mr. President, previously alluded. I realize that there is sometimes a trade-off between access and efficiency in decision-making, but making informal consultations off limits to all but Council members seems a bit rigid. For example, would Council members not benefit from having the main protagonists on any issue provide their views and even answer questions in informal consultations from time to time? This need not interfere with Council decision-making, because invited countries could be asked to leave before the Council begins its deliberations.

Finally, we have asked repeatedly for a more analytical annual report. But, that is seldom achieved, because, understandably, it is difficult to square the viewpoints of 15 Council members. If an analytical report is not possible, perhaps we could consider a more free-flowing debate on the Council's role over the preceding year. An open debate could be organized in the Security Council to take stock and receive feedback. Member States could make statements on what they considered to have been triumphs and shortcomings. Council members could also give their views. That might expose the Security Council to some criticism, but I think it would also lead to some praise. Ultimately, that is what feedback is about. And if we all behave constructively, this can only increase the sense of buy-in on the part of States that are non-members of the Council, because they will have had a chance to express their views.

Ultimately, we all need to work together to improve the Security Council's working methods. Singapore stands ready to work with and support members of the Council in that regard.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): Because of time limitations, I shall read out only a number of very important portions of the statement of the Philippines. My delegation respectfully requests that the full text be circulated to delegations.

Calls for changes and reforms in the Security Council are becoming louder and stronger. The focus of this open debate is on changes and reforms in the Council's working methods. Many Member States, including the Philippines, believe that this area of Council reform is the least controversial and that it is immediately achievable. Proposals to that end could have been successfully pursued much earlier had they not, unfortunately, been mingled with, or tied to the apron strings of, other Council reform proposals, such as those regarding the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council or even the issue of the veto power.

Today's open debate sends a clear message that reform of the Security Council's working methods can and should be addressed separately from the other areas of Council reform, which are more complex and complicated. This open debate attests to the Council's acknowledgement that it must come openly into the picture and demonstrate its political will and moral courage to reform its own working methods.

Thus, the Philippines commends and expresses gratitude to the Belgian presidency of the Security Council for holding this open debate during the last week of its mandate, thereby happily ending its stewardship with a historic event. For their special contributions towards reform in this area, which are detailed in the full text of this statement, the Philippines also commends the Security Council and its members, the group of five small countries, Japan, Viet Nam and the Austrian Mission.

There are strong, valid, just and equitable reasons why the Security Council should now decide upon and adopt the needed changes and reforms in its working methods. We must bear in mind and never forget that, pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter, in order to ensure prompt and effective action, Member States have conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The majority view holds that that conferment is a surrender of the sovereignty of Member States; a minority view holds that it is but a delegation of powers by Member States. It follows that, as of today, 177 Member States have, according to the majority view, surrendered a part of their sovereignty or, according to the minority view, delegated some of their powers to the Security Council for this purpose only: ensuring prompt and effective action in the maintenance of international peace and security. In carrying out its duties in relation to that responsibility, the Security Council is vested with tremendous specific powers under Chapters VI, VII, VIII and XII of the Charter. The enumeration of specific powers does not preclude the exercise of general powers.

All told, and in the light of the decisions, resolutions and actions that it has taken so far in the exercise of its powers, express or implied, the Security Council is described as a legislator, judge and executive in the final report and recommendations from the Austrian Initiative 2004-2008 (S/2008/270, annex). It need not be stressed that, because of those tremendous powers as legislator, judge and executive, the Security Council, either as holder — or, better yet, trustee — of the surrendered part of the sovereignty of Member States or as their delegate and agent for the exercise of that surrendered part, must, in its working methods — now principally condensed into its provisional rules of procedure — strictly adhere to democratic practices and procedures, observe due process and guarantee fairness, justice and equity to all concerned. In other words, as recommended in the final report and recommendations from the Austrian Initiative, it must observe the rule of law in all its proceedings. Among the essential elements of those guiding principles are accountability, fidelity to trust, predictability and transparency.

Thus, in general, the Philippines strongly recommends that those portions of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) that relate to those guiding principles and essential elements now be reduced or transformed into concrete and specific rules to be embodied in the Council's provisional rules of procedure. In particular, the Philippines recommends the following specific reform proposals, which necessarily involve changes in or amendments to the provisional rules of procedure.

First, the rules of procedure of the Security Council, which have remained provisional for 62 years, must now cease to be provisional. The word "provisional" in the body of those rules, known as the

provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, should be deleted. In 62 years, there have been only six revisions to the rules — proof that the rules of procedure have gained a very high degree of permanency. And, if account is taken of the fact that, among the principal United Nations organs, only the Security Council has retained or maintained provisional rules of procedure, one sees that something indeed is amiss. Many may find the provisional character of the 62-year-old rules of procedure of the Security Council to be a conundrum in judicial practice; they cannot divine its logic. In that regard, I concur with the recommendation from the Austrian Initiative that it be part of the Security Council's commitment to the rule of law that it adopt formal rules of procedure, rather than continuing to rely on provisional rules.

Secondly, due process and the rule of law demand that Member States that are not members of the Security Council but are the subjects of the Council's scrutiny should have the right to appear before the Council at all stages of the proceedings concerning them to state or defend their positions on the issues that are the subjects of or are related to that scrutiny. At present, such participation is unfairly limited by rules 37 and 38 of the provisional rules of procedure. Under rule 37, a State Member of the United Nations that is not a member of the Security Council may be invited to participate only as a result of a decision of the Council and only when the Council considers that the interests of that non-member are specially affected or when that non-member brings a matter to the attention of the Council in accordance with Article 35(1) of the Charter. That is a denial of due process, which is a violation of the basic principle of the rule of law. Due process and the rule of law require that a party must be heard before it is condemned.

Then, under rule 38, while any State Member of the United Nations that is invited to participate under rule 37 or in application of Article 32 of the Charter may submit proposals and draft resolutions, these proposals or draft resolutions can be put to a vote only at the request of a representative on the Security Council. If the proponent State has no friends in the Council, the right to make proposals is rendered meaningless, making the proposal or draft resolution an exercise in futility.

Thus, the Philippines recommends that rule 37 be amended to provide that a State Member of the United Nations that is not a member of the Security Council but which is under its scrutiny has the right to be present and to be heard during all proceedings related to such scrutiny and in any subsequent action that may arise therefrom. Further, the Philippines also recommends that rule 38 be amended to provide that proposals or draft resolutions submitted by such a State be discussed, acted upon and subject to a vote by the Security Council without a prior request from a Council member.

Thirdly, in view of the great increase in the general membership of the United Nations, there is a need for the Security Council to hear the views of that general membership. Hence the Council should increase the number of meetings, including informal meetings, that are open to the general membership at various stages of its consideration of a particular matter. Such an approach will further promote accountability and transparency and tend to invite the general membership's more active cooperation with the Council on the implementation of decisions taken on that matter. Necessary changes resulting from this approach could be set forth in chapter I of the rules of procedure.

Fourthly, in compliance with the requirements stemming from the principles of accountability and transparency, the Security Council should consider the wisdom and propriety of granting the wish of Member States, particularly non-Council members, to receive full information on issues discussed by the Council. Non-Council members expect output documents to faithfully and truly reflect discussions and deliberations in the Council. It has been observed that, as presented now, the annual report is not actually a report in the true meaning of the word. The repertoire of the practice of the Security Council, issued as requested in paragraph 1(b) of General Assembly resolution 686 (VII) (5 December 1952), is useful and a veritable constitutional guide to the proceedings of the Security Council. The Council should look into the way the repertoire is crafted in order to see how information could be presented beyond mere simple documentation.

The Security Council should also consider releasing periodic reports or substantive summaries to the General Assembly on matters the Council is seized with during the course of each year. Periodic reporting would enable the General Assembly and the general

membership to gain a more current appreciation of the status of matters before the Council.

We hope to see the light at the end of the tunnel on the issue of reform of the Security Council's working methods within a reasonable time frame.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Normandin (Canada): Mr. President, Canada welcomes the opportunity to address the Security Council on the important issue of its working methods, and I would like to thank you for convening this meeting.

As we all know, the Security Council has a central role in safeguarding international peace and security and in leading collective responses to today's security challenges. With more than 90,000 military, police and civilians deployed in peace support missions worldwide, the decisions of the Security Council affect the daily lives of millions of people. There is therefore a genuine urgency in ensuring that the Security Council is accountable, inclusive and transparent in its decision-making processes.

The President's excellent concept paper has laid out the progress made since the issuance of the note of the President of the Security Council in July 2006 (S/2006/507). Canada welcomes this progress. However, it is also clear that much more work needs to be done.

Regardless of the outcome of the ongoing discussions on expansion of the Security Council, it is a reform of the working methods that will have the greatest impact for most small- and medium-sized States, in particular with regard to the effectiveness of the Council and the legitimacy of its decisions. In this regard, Canada feels that immediate progress is both necessary and possible.

For the vast majority of Member States, of course, membership on the Security Council is a rare occurrence, while the decisions of the Security Council affect us all greatly. While it is clear that each Council member must act in accordance with its national conscience, the wider membership has a legitimate interest in knowing how those decisions are made and in contributing to them as appropriate.

For this reason, we urge the Council to redouble its efforts to enhance transparency through the increased use of public meetings. We acknowledge that there is occasionally the need for private meetings, for example, if the very resolution of a conflict hinges on discreet and confidential negotiation or consultation. But most meetings, such as briefings provided by the Secretariat, do not need to be conducted in private.

Canada strongly supports the recommendation contained in the President's concept paper that the Council should give a clear explanation of the rationale for the adoption of specific meeting formats and should set forth the objectives for each meeting.

Canada also urges the Council to increase consultations with the broader membership, for example, by making more frequent and systematic use of informal exchanges and by increasing the regularity of substantive briefings for non-Council Member States, including on the work of subsidiary bodies. In particular, consultations with troop-contributing countries and major stakeholders and financial contributors should be strengthened, so that their input can be taken into account prior to the establishment or renewal of a mission.

We would also encourage the Council to expand and deepen the practice of public and open debates, which allows the membership to contribute their perspectives and ideas.

We commend the Council for increasing the number of briefings for Member States over past years, particularly on the monthly programme of work, which has proven to be very useful. However, this practice should become a systematic one and not one that depends on the goodwill of the incumbent presidency.

(*spoke in French*)

The Security Council would also benefit from a serious consideration of the use of the veto. We all know the inhibiting effect that the veto — or even the threat of the veto — can have on Council deliberations. There have been several regrettable occasions in recent years when the spectre of the veto had the effect of dampening debate and delaying much-needed action.

But the veto is not, and was never meant to be, a tool for avoiding debate on certain issues. For that reason, Canada believes that any use of the veto should be publicly explained and justified. We also strongly believe that the veto has no place in deliberations on situations of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We urge the five permanent members of

the Security Council to commit to voluntary restrictions on its use in those situations.

Given the importance of the issue, Canada hopes that this open debate will not be a stand-alone event. It has been 14 years since the last open debate on Security Council working methods was held, and the membership can not afford to wait that long again.

Canada supports the suggestion put forward by the group of five small countries, that the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions be mandated to undertake a comprehensive review of note of the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), and that the Working Group present its findings to the Security Council, preferably in an open debate before the end of 2008.

In conclusion, Sir, I would like to thank you again for convening this meeting, which is a significant step towards making urgently needed reform. This reform will inevitably be an ongoing process, and one in which both members and non-members of the Security Council will need to engage. However, it is also an area where early action leading to tangible results for Member States is possible. Canada looks forward to engaging constructively on this process in the months ahead.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to extend our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate on the working methods of the Security Council. I also thank the Permanent Representatives of the group of five small nations — the S-5 — for having requested this timely meeting.

Fourteen long years have elapsed since the Council last addressed this issue. That is indeed an indication of the fact that the reform of the Security Council, which is of paramount importance for the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations, has not been accorded due attention, in particular as a result of reluctance on the part of some permanent members of the Council. We hope that open debates such as this one will be convened on a more regular and frequent basis to highlight the importance of the issue under discussion.

The note by the President of the Security Council and its annex, which are contained in document S/2006/507, is an important, although modest, step in the right direction. It reflects certain measures agreed upon among Council members in order to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, as well as its interaction and dialogue with non-members of the Council. However, that document is not inclusive and its provisions have not been adequately implemented in the past two years. Despite the emphasis that the overwhelming majority of Member States have all along placed on the necessity of bringing transparency and openness to the Council's working methods and its decision-making processes, to date, apart from isolated steps taken in that regard, the working methods of the Council have in reality not undergone major improvements.

The manner in which the Security Council functions at present and its failure to adequately improve its working methods and decision-making processes have brought about a situation where we are witnessing a decline in trust in this important organ in international public opinion. In turn, that trend has led to the loss of standing and credibility in the Council in the eyes of the general membership. In accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council should act on behalf of all Member States; but in reality, if there is one thing missing in the exercise of many of the Council's functions and the taking of its decisions, it is that very principle.

Not only do the Council's decisions decreasingly reflect the wishes and views of the overwhelming majority of the Member States of the Organization, in many cases they do not even represent the genuine opinion of the whole of its own membership. Despite the requirement contained in paragraph 42 of the President's note calling for consultation by the Council with the broader United Nations membership — in particular, interested Member States, including countries directly involved or specifically affected — when drafting, inter alia, resolutions, presidential statements and press statements, in many cases the general membership and even the countries concerned are kept totally uninformed of the negotiations on draft resolutions or statements directly affecting them, let alone being asked their views on the Council's outcome documents. That is also the case with regard to non-permanent members, which frequently face

situations of secretive negotiation between a few permanent members on important issues.

A legitimate question therefore arises: whether the outcome of such non-transparent, exclusive and political procedures can represent the points of view of the entire membership. How can one expect Member States to implement decisions that are made without even minimal engagement on their part, or even without their knowledge?

There are numerous other instances in which the Council has failed to honour its responsibility as regards the rights of non-Council members. They include, inter alia, the Council's refusal to allow non-members of the Council to participate in discussions on matters affecting them and their interests, in total disregard of Article 31 of the Charter; its denial of concerned countries' right to brief it on their positions on issues having a direct effect on their national interests; its continuation of a trend of selective notification as to the holding of its meetings; its failure to convene regular daily briefings; and its denial of the right of reply to countries against which allegations are raised under certain meeting formats of the Council.

It is indeed noteworthy that some Council members are adamant in their reluctance to implement the decisions on the working methods of the Security Council that they have agreed to, as contained in document S/2006/507. In that context, for instance, although paragraph 29 of the annex to that document stipulates that "when non-members are invited to speak to the Council, those who have a direct interest in the outcome of the matter under consideration may speak prior to Council members", on many occasions the Council has denied an opportunity to countries concerned to speak before a vote is taken, instead allowing them to speak only after the Council had taken a decision and is members had made their statements.

Hasty and unnecessary resort to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the threat or use of sanctions in cases where no actions have even been necessary, are other disturbing facts that have undermined the credibility and legitimacy of the Council's decisions. More alarming are the various cases in which certain permanent members of the Security Council have attempted to exploit this body as a vehicle to pursue their own national agendas.

Undoubtedly, impartiality, transparency and fairness are key premises on which the Security Council should base its approach in discharging its Charter-mandated responsibilities. To increase the transparency of its work and improve its working methods, the Council should seriously take into consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter, as well as the resolutions that clarify its relationship with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations.

The Security Council's norm-setting and law-making are also part of another increasing trend that runs counter to the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. In accordance with the Charter, the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, is primarily entrusted with the task of the progressive development and codification of international law. As stated by the representative of Cuba in her statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, to which we subscribe, the Security Council's increasing encroachment on the prerogatives of other main organs of the United Nations — in particular those of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as such technical bodies as the International Atomic Energy Agency — is also of particular concern to Member States.

A case in point is the imposition of the consideration by the Security Council of the peaceful nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the past 30 months, in a politically motivated move orchestrated by a few of its permanent members, the Security Council has taken unlawful, unnecessary and unjustifiable actions in adopting resolutions against the Islamic Republic of Iran in connection with its peaceful nuclear programme, which presents no threat whatsoever to international or regional peace and security. Those actions have been taken against our nation only because we have decided to exercise our inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology, as enshrined in and permitted by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

I wish to conclude by briefly addressing issues pertaining to the enlargement of the Security Council. Clearly, despite the extensive debates in the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council over the past 15 years, no significant progress has been made on the

substantive aspects of Council reform, such as its size and composition and the veto power. We concur with the view that the composition of the Council does not represent the realities of the international community today and that this issue should be thoroughly addressed and resolved in any meaningful reform of the United Nations. In our view, meaningful reform of the Council will be possible only through creating a situation where the question of under-representation of developing countries in the Council is seriously dealt with and where the question of the representation of nearly 1.5 billion Muslims is adequately and satisfactorily addressed. Every effort should be made to render the Council more democratic, representative and accountable. Iran stands ready to contribute to the achievement of that goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Ms. Espinosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, my delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having accepted the proposal to hold an open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We would also like to congratulate the Member States that promoted this initiative. This decision is an important contribution to the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, but above all it is crucial step towards establishing authentic interaction and a genuine dialogue between the Council and all of the States Members of the Organization. Since the last time that the Council held an open debate on this matter, 14 years ago, we have seen some progress. However, we must point out that the implementation of the measures that are set out in document S/2006/507 has been insufficient and lacking in regularity and firmness.

In failing to apply those methods and thus failing to improve its working methods, the Council has overlooked the fundamental premise that its actions are carried out on behalf of and in representation of all Member States. Likewise, it is important to point out that, even though the Council's agenda focuses on specific issues, the decisions that are adopted have a direct impact on all Member States. In recent years, we have witnessed various conflict situations that are unpredictable or have remained unaddressed, and which today pose a challenge to the Council and the United Nations in terms of adopting the right decisions. In many cases, those decisions go beyond discussions on the political or security issues, and lead us to reflect on the legal implications, within the context of international law.

New threats and emerging situations have permanently changed the nature of the Council's work. That is why it is crucial to improve its working methods and to provide it with the necessary efficiency to respond appropriately to conflict. In that respect, Ecuador believes that it is crucial that the Council hold open debates on a regular basis, in an interactive format and with enough time so that non-member States can contribute effectively to the decision-making process.

Likewise, my delegation would like to recall the commitment of the Council to hold more public meetings. Although private consultations are one of the instruments that facilitate the adoption of decisions, they were first designed as an exception, and cannot continue to be applied as a rule. It is crucial that all Member States be able to express their opinion on specific situations, especially those countries that are directly involved or especially affected by them, as should regional organizations, to which the United Nations Charter has given an important role in dispute settlement. My delegation believes that combining more informal public meetings with briefings by Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, special envoys or Secretariat officials, and establishing specific objectives for every meeting would help to prevent excessively lengthy sessions and the unnecessary repetition of items.

It is also important to step up interaction with troop-contributing countries when the Council has decided to implement, extend or adjust the mandates of peacekeeping operations. My delegation is convinced that those countries have the necessary experience and information to conduct a more objective assessment of the situation on the ground, which would undoubtedly lead to improving the decision-making process.

Those formats, however, should not turn into yet another ritual in which the Council simply goes through the motions. To effect real change, the opinions of non-Council-member States, stakeholders and regional organizations must be properly taken into account in adopting resolutions or presidential statements.

Improving the Council's working methods is a decision that cannot wait any longer, largely because the Council's legitimacy depends on it. Even though

Security Council reform requires a comprehensive approach, the effectiveness of the working methods of the Council cannot and should not be made dependent on enlargement criteria. My delegation hopes that the ideas expressed in this debate will receive the appropriate follow-up and lead to concrete actions, along with a continuous process of discussion and review.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Frommelt (Liechtenstein): As a member of the group of five small countries (S-5), we are grateful for the Security Council's positive reaction to our request to discuss the working methods of the Council in an open debate. Our gratitude goes to you, in particular, Mr. President, for preparing a concept paper (S/2008/528, annex) as a basis for our discussion today.

This is the first time since 1994 that the Council has taken up this topic in an open format. The French representative, on whose initiative that debate took place, commented at the time that "there is a certain uneasiness in relations between the Security Council and Members of the United Nations" (*S/PV.3483, p. 2*). That could certainly also be said today, and it is our hope that today's debate will help overcome some of that uneasiness.

The S-5 group established itself in early 2006, after the 2005 World Summit had failed to take action on Council reform. We took that step in light of two developments. First, many States are less and less likely to ever serve on the Council, or they will do so only at very widely spaced intervals. Secondly, the Council's work has an immediate impact on an ever-increasing number of Member States, beyond those on the agenda of the Council. We strongly believe that improvements in the working methods of the Council should take into account the changing nature of its work. Such improvements are essential for the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness, and they should not be made conditional upon enlargement. The Council responded by adopting the presidential note contained in document S/2006/507. We welcomed that note, while it fell short of our ideas and expectations. The 2006 note is a good document, containing numerous useful measures, but we have also noted that application of those measures has been uneven and inconsistent. Some Council members treated the measures as an à la carte menu to choose from — an approach that is contraindicated by the note itself. In recent months, there has seemed to be less and less awareness of the measures in the note among Council members. The frequency of meetings of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has decreased rapidly. We hope that this debate will bring some of the previous dynamic and energy back to the Working Group.

Our comments today will focus on measures in the note relating to access. Access of non-members to the work of the Council is crucial for the effectiveness and legitimacy of its work. First, in that note, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to increase recourse to open meetings. It contains a useful summary of the meeting formats available to the Council. Public meetings can involve briefings, following which only Council members deliver statements, and provide a very useful format that should be used more frequently. Under the current practice, United Nations officials often brief the Council in private meetings, even if non-members have a strong interest in the matter under consideration. We encourage the Council to conduct such briefings in an open format, as a general rule. It is obviously the Council's prerogative to meet thereafter in a closed format for informal discussions.

Secondly, open debates are, in principle, a very useful tool that should be applied regularly. At the same time, the current practice has to a certain extent become a ritual and has little or no impact on the Council's decision-making. The timing of such debates should be revised in order to allow non-members to offer their input prior to the Council's decision-making. Such meetings could also be held in a more informal, interactive format, for example in the context of an open briefing on the relevant report of the Secretary-General. Seeking the views of the wider membership is a necessary element of the Council's mandate to carry out its functions on behalf of all United Nations Member States. Such processes should, therefore, be initiated more frequently, also by non-members.

Thirdly, access by non-members to the sanctions committees remains a crucial topic. While the note states the requirements, the practice leaves room for improvement. Earlier this year, we asked to meet with the 1267 Committee, as part of a group of States, to discuss relevant matters. However, the request was

only taken up after extensive consultations within the Council. The meeting eventually took place, but there was only limited substantive response from the Committee, and there was no continuation of that dialogue when the Council drafted resolution 1822 (2008). We believe that improved access to the sanctions committees would benefit the Council and the implementation of sanctions.

Finally, the Council could make greater use of informal consultations with interested Member States, as urged in the note. Informal consultations should offer the opportunity for Council members to listen to the views of such States, in particular when the States are directly affected by a decision under consideration.

We appreciate the heavy workload and the time constraints under which the Council is conducting its work. We acknowledge the improvements that have been made. Further measures to improve efficiency are necessary to enable the Council successfully to carry out all its tasks. Discussing issues in specific configurations, such as in the Peacebuilding Commission, could be an interesting format in the future.

Our ideas on access are not meant to involve greater consumption of time or to constitute an additional burden for the Council. Instead, they are straightforward and aimed at improving the quality of the decision-making process. Our interest in improved working methods is driven by our belief that the Council's role must be further strengthened and that its effectiveness can be improved. We appreciate the willingness of the Council to meet in this format today and hope that the dialogue on these issues can be continued later this year.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for the way in which you are conducting the work of the Council this month and for convening this open debate on a theme of such great importance.

Our country was a member of the Council when the reforms contained in presidential note S/2006/507 were adopted in July 2006. In the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the presidency of Japan, we witnessed how difficult is to change the practices and procedures that were not very transparent, established by the permanent members over the past years. The effort to improve the working methods of the Council had started in earlier years. Allow me to recall the role of Argentina, together with the delegation of New Zealand, in the establishment of meetings to exchange information with troop-contributing countries during the 1990s.

We believe that the agreements reached in 2006 are positive but also insufficient. It is necessary to continue the progress towards greater democracy in the Council and greater openness to the membership, which will greatly contribute to a more effective organization.

Here, I should like to recall some of the proposals we have made regarding the Council's working methods. First, we must undertake an annual or biannual revision of mandates and recommendations in the case of conflicts that we all know will last a long time. Council members should make the greatest effort to focus the debate on specific action-oriented proposals and decisions. In that regard, the Secretary-General or the Special Representatives should place more emphasis on the necessity to receive advice or guidance from the Council. It is also necessary to establish more frequent contact between the principal organs of the United Nations, so as to mitigate negative perceptions of the Council and to achieve more coordinated joint action.

Meetings between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with the Security Council president of the coming month could be organized in relation to the Council's agenda. We believe that regional groups could play an important role here, increasing the legitimacy and accountability of the Council.

We must also be more effective in public meetings with regard to the use of time. States that are not members of the Council could also contribute to the work of the Council committees with their experience of or participation in the region of the conflict in question. Another point is that we must produce an annual report that is more analytical and substantive, and at the same time avoid lengthy negotiation over its contents.

With regard to other matters, I shall mention very briefly the question of the veto and its limitation, which is an issue that belongs to the General Assembly

and the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform. Despite that, we believe it is necessary to mention it in this open debate, since its use and the threat of its use operate as a procedural device when permanent members pursue their national interests, a process that affects both the working methods and the effectiveness of the Council in achieving its objective of enforcing international peace and security. In that respect, we note our regret and concern over the more frequent use of the veto this year.

Finally, we once again call upon the Members of the Organization to reach an agreement on Council reform, based on a transitional approach, without winners or losers, that would make it possible to resolve the current impasse that has lasted a long time, 14 years to be precise.

The approaches proposed by the facilitators and the task force on Security Council reform established by the President of the General Assembly could lead to a reformed Council that is more democratic and efficient. For this, transparent and effective working methods are also required. The Council must also become more dynamic and incorporate more regional decision-making.

The successive failures of the Council show that the permanent members have not kept their part of the bargain struck in 1945: permanent seats and a veto in exchange for responsibility to the broader membership. Indeed, they are clearly making any attempt at reform in terms of composition or working methods impossible. It is time for them reconsider and to make possible true change that will revitalize the Organization and enable it to fulfil its purposes and principles.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Ebner (Austria): My delegation would like to thank the Belgian presidency for convening today's open debate on the working methods of the Security Council and for preparing an excellent concept paper (S/2008/528, annex) to guide our discussion. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the measures contained in presidential note S/2006/507 of 19 July 2006 in the Security Council in this open format and are grateful to Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland for this initiative.

The very fact of the holding this open debate is in itself an important contribution to enhancing transparency and interaction between the Council and the United Nations membership at large. Austria has supported these efforts from the very start and was one of the 10 non-members of the Council that participated in the last open debate of the Security Council on its working methods and procedure, in 1994 (see S/PV.3483). We are pleased to see that today's list of speakers is much longer, and we hope that open debates on this issue will be convened on a regular basis.

As has been outlined in the concept paper, since the issuance of the 2006 presidential note considerable progress has been made to increase the Council's transparency and efficiency, as well as its interaction with non-members of the Council. We wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. However, we believe there is room for further progress.

In addition to transparency, interaction and efficiency, the issue of improving the working methods of the Security Council is central to the functioning of the Council in general, the effectiveness of its decisions and the strengthening of the rule of law. Since the effectiveness of the implementation of Council decisions depends on compliance by Member States, their involvement will increase the understanding, acceptance and implementation of Council decisions.

As is well known, Austria is a long-time advocate of the rule of law. In our view, it is imperative to strengthen the rule of law in all its dimensions: at the national, international and institutional levels. We would therefore like to add a few comments to today's discussion from the broader perspective of the strengthening of the rule of law.

In the autumn of 2004, Austria launched a panel series on the role of the Security Council in strengthening a rules-based international system. A final report entitled "The United Nations Security Council and the Rule of Law" was presented in New York in April this year and issued as a United Nations document (S/2008/270, annex). The report contains 17 recommendations on how the Security Council could strengthen the rule of law in its various fields of activity, many of which are pertinent for today's

debate. I would like to highlight the following three areas.

First, as the Security Council plays a central role in promoting the rule of law, the report analyses the question of how the rule of law might apply to the Council itself as a creature of law. The report recommends that the Council should use its extraordinary powers for extraordinary purposes. The exercise of such powers should be limited in time, and it should be subject to periodic review. As a rule, the Council should allow for representations by affected States and, where possible, individuals.

Secondly, the report discusses the tension between effectiveness and legitimacy of Security Council actions in the context of quasi-legislative resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. As the effectiveness of the implementation of Council decisions depends on participation by Member States, the legitimacy of those decisions may depend on participation by Member States through their involvement in the decision-making process. The report therefore recommends that when the Security Council adopts a resolution of a legislative character that is general rather than particular in its effect, the legitimacy of and respect for that resolution will be enhanced by a process that ensures transparency, participation and accountability, which should include the holding of open debates on any such proposals, wide consultation with the membership of the United Nations and other specially affected parties and a procedure to review the resolution within an appropriate time frame.

And thirdly, with regard to targeted Security Council sanctions and the protection of individual rights, the report addresses the question of reviewing listing and de-listing decisions of the Council. While a number of Security Council resolutions have marked significant progress in this field, it has still been questioned whether these measures have satisfied the 2005 World Summit call for "fair and clear procedures" (*General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 109*). The report thus recommends that the Council should be proactive in further improving fair and clear procedures to protect the rights of individuals affected by its decisions, which should include, as a minimum standard, the four basic elements listed in the 2006 non-paper of the Secretary-General, annexed to a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council (see S/PV.5474). The Council should invite the Secretary-General to present it with options to further strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of sanctions regimes.

We hope that the report and its recommendations will provide valuable input for the current debate on improving the working methods of the Security Council. We understand that some suggestions may require further discussion. However, we also believe that a number of concrete steps to further these goals could easily be agreed. These could include a renewed commitment to paragraph 3 of the annex to the 2006 presidential note, on briefings after informal consultations and private debates; improving access to Security Council meetings for affected non-members of the Council, including informal consultations; and enhancing the consultation process with troop-contributing countries prior to the establishment or renewal of the mandate of a mission.

The Council's working methods have developed over the years, and we believe that they will always remain a work in progress. As the work of the Security Council changes and adapts to changed circumstance, so should the Council's working methods. Involvement of the wider membership will remain key in order to serve the whole Organization.

As the representative of Austria stated at the open debate in 1994, it remains

> "imperative to find a balance between the need for swift and effective decision-making and the need to give all Member States concerned the opportunity to make themselves heard at an appropriate time, thus ensuring that their opinions are taken into account by the Security Council when decisions are formulated and taken". (*S/PV.3483, p. 19*)

Today, those remarks remain as valid as ever, as we are still on a quest to find that balance.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Sen (India): Thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling today's debate on an issue which is of significant importance to all Member States, both within and outside the Security Council. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month.

While the Charter confers upon the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, paragraph 1 of Article 24 also stipulates that it acts on behalf of all

Member States in discharging that responsibility. Accordingly, the Council's working methods have always been of direct, abiding and immediate interest to all Member States. That is underscored not only by the interest of many States in today's topic, but also by the fact that issues relating to the Council's working method were identified almost 60 years ago. It was in April 1949 that the General Assembly unanimously adopted its resolution 267 (III) on this issue — a resolution which regrettably remains unimplemented. However, its adoption underlines that such criticism has substantial precedent. An equally illustrious pedigree is shared by the Council's rules of procedure, which have adamantly remained "provisional" over the decades.

While we are happy to discuss the Security Council's working methods in an open debate in the Council, I must emphasize that this is an issue that transcends the limited membership of this body. The extent of interest among non-members of the Council and the fact that the Council acts on behalf of the larger membership reinforce the point that the General Assembly has a legitimate role in deliberating upon the working methods of the Council.

Nonetheless, the very fact that we are debating this issue here reflects recognition of the existence of a problem. Indeed, the note by the President of the Security Council dated 19 July 2006 (S/2006/507) voiced some of these concerns by listing some 63 action points. While the concept paper for this meeting (S/2008/528, annex) assessed the implementation of those measures, we do not fully share its somewhat optimistic conclusions.

Troop-contributing countries have also long sought to be involved in decision-making in peacekeeping operations, rather than being consulted in a pro forma manner. Concerns persist over access to information and documentation; the absence of access to the Council on particular issues as a matter of routine for both the country concerned and important stakeholders; and the lack of systematic access, including by island and small States, to subordinate bodies of the Council. All these are recognized to be among the problems besetting the Council.

While I shall not dwell on problems in the Council's working methods through a recitation of various examples — the statement of the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement adequately covers the salient points — there can be no ignoring the growing chorus of voices that recognize flaws in the Council's working methods.

Yet, the many flaws in the Council's working methods are only symptoms of a deeper malaise that lies in its structure and composition. The problem of the Council is not only a problem of working methods, but also one of additional requirements for logistical, defence and financial capabilities and reinforced legitimacy, which would lead to wider acceptance and more effective implementation of optimal decisions. Thus, the lacunae in the working methods of the Council cannot be fundamentally rectified without equally comprehensive reform and expansion of the membership of the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. In that connection, we endorse the point made by South Africa and other countries.

It is sometimes argued that we could consider reform of the Council's working methods as an end in itself. However, in the real world, achieving genuine, lasting and necessary improvements in the working methods of the Council cannot be divorced from an expansion in the number of permanent members. It is necessary to underline that point, since earlier we witnessed an expansion in the number of non-permanent members, with little improvement in the Council's working methods. To acknowledge that is not to denigrate the conscientious and strenuous efforts of many non-permanent members in the past. However, their efforts were always doomed to fail, because the structure of the Council had not changed.

Not the least of the limitations was the fact that, by their very nature, non-permanent members are transient and lack the institutional memory necessary to follow through and implement far-reaching changes. The challenge of being new members on the Council also adds to that problem. The very fact that the arguments that are being made today to improve the Council's working methods are the very same ones that have been made for more than 60 years simply proves the point.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate our firm conviction that genuine and lasting improvements in the working methods of the Security Council can be possible only as part of a comprehensive process of Council reform based on both reform and expansion of its composition in the permanent and non-permanent

categories. It is only when there are new permanent members that are held accountable to the wider membership through an appropriate review mechanism that there will be a genuine response to the long-standing demand for meaningful and durable changes in the working methods of the Council. In the absence of such comprehensive reform, a fundamental improvement in the working methods would either escape us, as it has for more than 60 years or, even if miraculously achieved, would not last without the institutional memory, continuing commitment and peer example of new permanent members held accountable to the general membership.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to discuss the working methods of the Security Council. We believe it is both timely and appropriate for the Council to have this opportunity to contemplate this important issue. I would also like to express my profound appreciation to the Secretary-General for his interest in and commitment to enhancing all components of the Organization.

As shown in the 2006 note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), it is widely agreed that the Council's working methods are in need of reform. In pursuing that objective, consensus should be sought wherever possible. In particular, if the Council is to maintain the moral authority necessary to carry out its primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter, then it should operate in a manner that is more open, transparent, consultative and democratic.

In that regard, the Republic of Korea appreciates the efforts of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and welcomes the progress made in fostering greater transparency and inclusiveness in the work of the Council.

While private consultations and closed meetings are necessary in certain situations, we encourage the Security Council to make more of its meetings and debates open, while reducing the amount of activity that takes place behind closed doors. We believe that participation in the Council's discussions by non-members that are parties to any dispute under consideration should be ensured whenever possible. Similarly, we would like to see more consultations between Security Council sanctions committees and those Member States that would be affected by the sanctions.

Furthermore, transparency would be well served by more substantive and analytical reports from the Security Council. Publications and submissions of the Council could be qualitatively improved to allow the wider membership to gain more insight into its work. The Council might start with refining its annual reports to the General Assembly to add analytical value, rather than merely giving descriptions of the work of the Council during a given year.

As a troop-contributing country, the Republic of Korea finds the Security Council's meetings with such countries to be very useful and informative. We would also appreciate having more meaningful and substantive participation in the early decision-making process regarding missions in which our troops will be involved. Likewise, as one of the significant financial contributors to peacekeeping operations, we would like the Security Council to keep the General Assembly informed regarding the budgetary and on-the-ground implications of the missions that it mandates.

We note with appreciation that the Council has come up with an inventive way to diversify its working methods: by establishing working groups on substantive issues of international concern, such as children and armed conflict. Such forums allow the Council to have greater flexibility in undertaking new tasks as they arise. The Council is encouraged to continue to use such inventiveness to enhance the transparency and inclusiveness of its work.

In concluding, I would like to emphasize that the improvements in the Council's working methods are an integral part of overall Council reform and that efforts to improve its working methods should continue.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): I very much welcome the opportunity to participate in today's debate on the Security Council's working methods. I thank you, Mr. President, having taken the initiative to convene it, and I thank the representative of Costa Rica for having proposed it. This debate is timely, even though the broader subject of Security Council reform has been actively discussed at various levels since the 2005

World Summit. Many of us have played a role in moving the issue forward; I had the privilege of taking up the subject of the Council's working methods as a facilitator to the President of the General Assembly. Some members have been particularly active within the Security Council and deserve to be commended for their work — notably, the successive Chairs of the Security Council's relevant Informal Working Group: the representatives of Japan, Slovakia and now Panama.

The importance of Security Council reform cannot be overemphasized, and I believe there is a broad consensus that, during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, we should start negotiations on the various options and proposals on the table.

Following your suggestion, Mr. President, I will focus in this debate on the particular aspect of the Security Council reform that concerns the involvement of States and other parties not members of the Security Council in the Council's work. That is merely one aspect, but an important one nonetheless. Options for reform in this area should be pursued without delay in view of their importance to the legitimacy of the Council's deliberations and decisions in specific cases. Access to the Security Council by non-members can ensure an important infusion of credibility.

The group of five small States — the S-5 — has made very useful proposals in this regard. Others have made suggestions as well — some more radical than others, including by non-governmental organizations, such as Independent Diplomat, which has called for the introduction of a universal right of address.

These proposals and suggestions have to be seen in the light of an already developing practice in the Security Council to be more accessible to non-members and their views. For instance — and this should be recognized — access to the Council for Member States with specific responsibilities in the Peacebuilding Commission has considerably improved. Also, as has been pointed out in the Belgian presidency's concept paper (S/2008/528, annex), it has become more common for countries directly concerned by a particular agenda item to take the floor before Council members.

But more can be done, and there is a need for clear guidelines. I would suggest that the Security Council consider providing increased access to its work along the following lines. I hope that the Security Council will be willing to look at these proposals together with many of the other proposals that are already on the table.

First, as a general rule, State and non-State parties to a conflict on the Council's agenda, affected States, relevant regional organizations and interested non-governmental actors should have the right to be heard by the Council whenever it discusses a conflict and especially in the early stages of its consultations. "To be heard" should mean, as a minimum, that all of those entities should have the right to submit their views to the Council in writing and upon their own initiative. Such contributions should then be distributed as Security Council documents.

Secondly, all States parties to or directly affected by a conflict on the Council's agenda, as well as relevant regional organizations, should have the right to speak before the Council. They must be able to exercise that right by making a simple request to the Council, as appropriate and subject to the Council's agenda. Such a request should be granted automatically. This right should extend beyond the Council's subsidiary bodies and should include the Security Council's plenary discussions, either in closed or open meetings. But this right should not apply in closed consultations on Council statements or resolutions.

Thirdly, and similarly, non-State parties to a conflict should also be given the possibility to address the Council at their request. However, in these cases, it must remain the Council's prerogative to decide which of these requests it is to grant and in which specific situations. The Council may limit access to its deliberations to written contributions, which, as pointed out, should be all parties' basic right. This basic right can be denied only to those parties that have been blacklisted by the Council as terrorist organizations.

With these few measures, my delegation believes that the Council can ensure the necessary democratization of its working methods. Most important, these measures can ensure that all parties that could be part of a political solution to a particular conflict are heard.

I am talking explicitly about the right and need to be heard. It should be clear that the right to decide must remain exclusively with the members of the Security Council. But their decisions will gain more

weight and credibility once all relevant parties have been given the opportunity to make their inputs at the early stages of the decision-making process.

As I said previously, I hope that the Council will consider these suggestions, together with the many other ideas and proposals that are already on the table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tonga.

Mr. Tupouniua (Tonga): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, comprising Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, the Kingdom of Tonga.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your strong leadership in convening this open debate to discuss the working methods of the Council. We share the concerns raised in the note of the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507). We would like to acknowledge the work of the group of five small States, the S-5. We hope this debate offers constructive and practical advice for the Council in the light of the increasing workload and the competing interests that demand the Council's attention.

The Pacific small island developing States also share the concerns outlined in the presidency's concept paper (S/2008/528, annex) and the focus on improving the Council's efficiency, transparency and interaction.

The efficiency of the Council is of paramount importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. New conflicts have emerged since the end of the cold war. As a result, the Council has been called upon to address these issues and to devote its resources and attention to meeting the increasing demands for peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

The Council's workload grew exponentially in the early 1990s, causing the Council to evolve from a body that for decades met only sporadically into one that held 272 formal meetings and 193 informal consultation sessions in 2006, an increase of 21 per cent over 2004 levels. Council output, measured by resolutions and presidential statements, increased by 36 per cent over the same period.

The increase in the demand for the Council's involvement in conflict resolution is reflective of the changing times. More than ever, our collective well-being depends upon how we respond, in multiple forums, to emerging cross-cutting issues. Both the traditional and non-traditional kinds of threat deserve the attention of the Council. We must widen the scope of acceptance and address the substantial security implications of certain cross-cutting issues. In our view, we believe that we should not become so inflexible that we deny the opportunity for the Council to analyse and consider the substantial security implications of certain cross-cutting issues, such as climate change.

We emphasize that in his 2001 report entitled "Prevention of armed conflict" (S/2001/574), the Secretary-General noted that in the last century, collective security was often pursued by the Council through reactive rather than preventive means, and was defined almost exclusively in military terms. The Secretary-General pledged to move the United Nations "from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention" (*para. 4*) and specifically referred to creative tools at the Security Council's disposal to increase utilization of proactive strategies. The Secretary-General encouraged the Council

> "to consider innovative mechanisms, such as establishing a subsidiary organ, an ad hoc informal working group or other informal technical arrangement to discuss prevention cases on a continuing basis, particularly in regard to periodic regional or sub-regional reports ... as well as other early warning or prevention cases brought to its attention by Member States". (*para. 39, recommendation 3*)

Bearing in mind the Secretary-General's 2001 report, we note that the Council has a truly unique skill set that it can engage to address the security implications of climate change. That can be accomplished in ways that are outcome-oriented but which do not overburden the Council's workload and which complement existing agreements.

The need for the reform and the improvement of the working methods of the Council is obvious. The Council has never been static and has always responded to new challenges to international peace and security. Examples are found in the establishment of peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding processes.

Today, new challenges such as climate change threaten international peace and security. The working methods have to be flexible to address such challenges while taking the increasing workload of the Council into consideration. It is important that the working methods adapt to the urgent need to address the security implications of emerging cross-cutting issues such as climate change and that they take a proactive approach to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Pacific small island developing States would therefore like to reiterate their position that meaningful reform of the working methods of the Security Council should be included in the intergovernmental negotiations mandated to commence during the current session of the General Assembly. Open negotiations will give all Members of the United Nations a voice and will certainly help the Council to be more effective, efficient, transparent and democratic in the future.

The concept paper (S/2008/528) identifies transparency as one of the major challenges for the Council in reforming its working methods. We share the concern about the need to strike a better balance between private consultations and the commitment to conduct more public meetings. Several issues, including the following, need to be considered by the Council.

First, the Council has increasingly shifted from open to closed meetings when conducting its affairs. We hope the Council can take into account the impact of its decisions on non-members and increase the number of open debates and meetings.

Other issues include the provision of more regular structured briefings to help address the concerns of non-members and increasing the level of input from the wider United Nations membership in the decision-making process to determine the format for a particular Council meeting. The current process lacks transparency and is not accessible to non-members.

There is a need to improve the effectiveness of the wrap-up sessions. In 2001, members agreed that interactive wrap-up sessions at the end of a presidency would be a useful exercise. Unfortunately, many of the wrap-up sessions did not take place, with the last having taken place in 2005. Such meetings would be useful for non-members, and in particular for smaller nations with limited resources, to follow the proceedings of the Council.

There is also the issue of encouraging and facilitating better interaction with troop-contributing countries by conducting regular meetings to discuss substantive matters and concerns. That is particularly relevant for troop-contributing countries that are not members to the Security Council.

The growing number of activities undertaken by the Council has had a great impact on the membership at large. Issues such as the contributions of troops required for major new peacekeeping missions or the imposition of new sanctions regimes by the Council have produced impacts on United Nations Members that contribute to the its peacekeeping forces. That is particularly important for Pacific small island developing States, as a number of our countries have been involved in the peacekeeping process. As non-members of the Council, Pacific small island developing States support any efforts to increase transparency and allow greater participation by the entire membership of the United Nations.

Many of the agreements reached by the Council are negotiated through experts meetings, which are not open to non-members. Although the informal consultations are made public in the *Journal of the United Nations*, the summaries of the discussions are not readily available. Draft resolutions and statements are often circulated among the members of the Council. They are often trimmed and edited before reaching informal consultations. Such a practice makes it hard for non-members to be readily informed of the work of the Council. It also makes it difficult for non-members to provide meaningful input into the process, even in rare opportunities such as open debates.

Finally, we have raised a number of concerns and made several observations regarding the working methods of the Council. We have outlined the difficulties faced by non-members, such as Pacific small island developing States, in having timely access to the Council's work and being able to effectively participate in its decision-making process. We hope that the Council's working methods can be improved to reflect the increasing need for efficiency, transparency and interaction.

We are confident that the Council will rise to the challenge and widen its scope to consider the security implications of cross-cutting issues such as climate change. It is also our hope that the Council can address the issues of the veto and increased membership within

the intergovernmental process, rather than through the open-ended working group mechanism, and, in the case of working methods, the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): I would like to felicitate you, Mr. President, and the Belgian delegation for your skilful handling of the Council's work during this month. Let me also express our appreciation to Ambassador Le Luong Minh and his team for Viet Nam's successful presidency in July.

The holding of this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council is a welcome step. The group of five small nations, which has made the issue of working methods its forte, merits our appreciation for seeking this debate. We also thank others who supported the initiative.

In carrying out its duties under the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations. It is therefore only appropriate for the Council to know and understand how the general membership perceives its work and the methods it employs to carry out that work. The efficiency and transparency of the Council's work and its decision-making process are issues of great interest and importance to a large majority of the United Nations membership. The improvement of working methods is the part of the Security Council reform issue on which there is almost complete consensus among Member States, irrespective of their positions on the other aspects, such as an increase in the membership.

Pakistan fully endorses the comprehensive statement made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We hope that the proposals set out in that statement, along with other proposals made during this debate, will be given due consideration. I would like to take this opportunity to share a few thoughts.

Having watched the Security Council from both inside and outside, one can sense and appreciate the important work that it performs and the heavy responsibility that it carries. The Council has a wide-ranging agenda and is increasingly assuming a larger role in the management of international relations. Its scope of action extends from pre-conflict peacemaking to conflict management, peacekeeping and post-conflict consolidation. It is the only body that can make binding decisions and obligations and take enforcement action. Directly or indirectly, its work concerns and affects all Member States, who in turn are logically expected to follow and assess its work.

No doubt, there has been some improvement in the working methods of the Council, and that is to be welcomed. But it is not enough. Unfortunately, among the general membership there remains widespread dissatisfaction about the Council's work and its decisions. The main objective of those measures in enhancing the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council is thus not being achieved. We are not sure whether the answer is in identifying a new set of measures. If we could only implement the existing ones, it might suffice.

It is interesting to note that many of the measures mentioned in document S/2006/507 and other proposals made in the past and in today's debate regarding the working methods of the Council emanate directly from the United Nations Charter and its provisions relating to the Security Council and other principal organs. An example is Article 24, which, inter alia, requires that in discharging its duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It also requires the Council to submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration. Articles 31 and 32 provide for the participation of non-members of the Council directly concerned with an issue in the Council's discussions.

There are other proposals that simply seek the implementation of the Council's own rules of procedure, which, by the way, remain provisional to date: rule 48, for example, which states that unless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public. Provisions for the pacific settlement of disputes, and enforcement measures when required, as well as cooperation with regional arrangements are all mentioned in the Charter. Enhancing the relationship with troop-contributing countries is an objective contained in Council's own resolution 1353 (2001). The General Assembly's Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform has also deliberated extensively on these issues in the context of the so-called cluster II issues, and has made several agreed recommendations.

Others have spoken on many of these issues, and I do not want to be repetitive. The crux of the matter is that these provisions, which are mostly agreed provisions, are not being faithfully implemented. In some cases, they are even misinterpreted and misused or abused. That has a direct negative bearing on the Council's efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy. Thus, we are often faced with questions as to whether the Council is effective in carrying out its core mandate, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security. Has it acted in accordance with the Charter? Did it reflect the views and interests of the membership? Did it adequately engage and consult the Member States directly concerned by an issue? A review of the Council's agenda and dynamics provides answers to many of those questions.

In recent years, the Council has been relatively effective in addressing internal crises. Its record has, however, been less impressive in resolving inter-State conflicts. In fact, the Council does not deal directly with some of the major conflicts and threats to international peace and security. Some other major unresolved issues, including in our own region, have lain idle on the agenda of the Council. However, on the ground, those are live issues. They pose a threat to international peace and security. Even on some important issues, which are on its active agenda, such as the Middle East, the role of the Council has been sidelined and viewed by many as ineffective and partisan.

The determination of the Council's agenda depends to a large extent on the positions and priorities of the permanent members and major Powers. We have witnessed inaction and delay in the Council, even in the face of the most obvious acts of aggression and breaches of peace. On the other hand, there is proaction, even interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, even in the absence of a clear threat to international peace and security. Double standards and selectivity, including in the implementation of the Council's own resolutions, threats and the use of force and other forms of coercion are equally disquieting.

The provisions for the pacific settlement of disputes remain grossly under-utilized. In contrast, there is a dangerous tendency to have recourse — too often and too soon — to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. That trend has even created the impression, though incorrect, that non-Chapter VII provisions are of a lesser value or are not binding.

As regards the format of Council's open and closed meetings, there are arguments on the need to balance confidentiality and efficiency on the one hand and inclusiveness and transparency on the other. Irrespective of the preferences of Member States, we are nowhere close to the coveted balance. It was acknowledged in the Council's open debate on working methods 14 years ago that the public meetings had become more of a formality and everything was discussed and agreed beforehand in the informal or closed consultations. The current situation is no different. The Council remains a closed club. Informal consultations apart, the Council's real work and decision-making transpires often in smaller and more secretive conclaves, which in some cases exclude even some members of the Council.

It is therefore not surprising that, despite a number of public meetings, there has been little tangible improvement in transparency and understanding of the decision-making process of the Council. While we are far from implementing Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, in the case of informal consultations, there have also been instances in which the most directly concerned parties were denied participation in open meetings.

Increasing interaction between the Security Council and the general membership is a key objective. The Council's interaction and coordination with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission is vital for a comprehensive United Nations approach to peace and development. As the leading troop-contributing country, Pakistan has a particular interest in enhancing the troop-contributing countries' engagement with the Council and the Secretariat. As others have noted, those consultation mechanisms should involve a timely, two-way exchange of information and views, which should form part of the input for the Council's decision-making.

While we preserve the central role of the United Nations, the relationship and interaction with regional organizations can and should also be promoted in accordance with the Charter. The Council's enhanced interaction with the African Union is a good example. The objective of such partnerships should be to promote coordination and coherence in policies in order to pursue the collective objectives of peace and security.

Enhanced cooperation with regional organizations also strengthens the concept of regional representation in the Council. That has great potential to ensure wider representation of Member States in the Council. It would also have a positive bearing on the working methods, since regional representation would pursue larger group interests in the Council rather than individual interests.

We are seeking a comprehensive reform of the Council. The real objective of improving the working methods is to have a Council that is more transparent, democratic, representative and effective, thus enhancing its legitimacy and credibility. The central and crucial question is whether we can achieve those objectives by enlarging the coterie of the powerful few, or by strengthening the democratic representation, role and influence of the general membership of the United Nations in the Security Council. We believe the latter is the right and the only feasible approach. The concepts of permanency, privilege and special status should have no place in today's United Nations. The best way of ensuring the accountability of the Council to the general membership of the United Nations is through the addition of non-permanent elected members, subject to a periodic democratic test by their peers and the General Assembly.

The United Nations is an indispensable instrument for the promotion of our shared goals of peace, development and human rights. We can attain those goals by following the essence of the Charter, which is cooperative multilateralism. Sustainable peace and security can only be achieved when principles have primacy over power. The world needs a Security Council that does not always mirror power realities, but that can also stand up for the weak and the powerless with moral authority and credibility.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and for having distributed the informative concept paper contained in S/2008/528, with which we agree on several issues.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the Cuban delegation on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we would like to take this opportunity to add — or reiterate — a few comments that we consider important.

At the outset, we would like to acknowledge that, even before the publication of the note by the President of the Council (S/2006/507), which was mainly a compilation of measures that were already in practice, the work of the Council has progressively benefited from greater transparency, effectiveness and interaction. Nonetheless, we must remember that those improvements have been made in an ad hoc manner and are not binding. Each of those improvements responded mainly to the ability and the will of each presidency to maintain contact with delegations that are not members of the Council and, more importantly, to listen to and take into account their suggestions, observations and concerns.

That is why we agree with other delegations on the importance of discussing and formalizing the rules of procedure in order to have the necessary certainty and predictability to be able to tackle energetically and flexibly the various questions, whether recurring or emergency matters, that come before the Council.

It is also important for us to recognize the increasingly widespread perception that the members of the Council, in particular the elected members, serve to represent the membership of the Organization in its entirety. In our particular case, we would like to thank the delegations of Costa Rica, Panama and Peru for keeping the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States abreast of the activities of the Council over the past two years.

We take this opportunity to draw your attention to the pending task of improving the interaction between United Nations organs, in particular between the Council and the General Assembly, which leaves much to desired. Several initiatives taken in recent years that seem to have been dropped could be taken up once again. In that regard, we recall the note in document S/2002/199 concerning the content and adoption of the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly. We believe that it would be useful once again to have a report that meets the analytical needs of the rest of the membership. Not only should it be adopted in a public meeting, but a public debate on its content should be permitted. We highly appreciate the efforts of the delegation of Viet Nam to address this shortcoming by organizing an informal meeting this year.

At the same time, however, we cannot overlook the need for consideration of the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Strengthening that relationship is another

major challenge on our agenda. We reaffirm our conviction that there can and must be a closer relationship between the two organs; in our view, the Peacebuilding Commission provides an invaluable opportunity to deepen and strengthen that relationship.

Those are some of the points we wished to bring to the attention of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Herczyński (Poland): Let me start by thanking the presidency for organizing today's open discussion on the working methods of the Security Council. The concept paper prepared by the delegation of Belgium (S/2008/528, annex) and the document annexed to the presidential note of 2006 (S/2006/507) can serve as an excellent basis for our discussion. We would like to underline that it is up to the whole membership of the United Nations — not exclusively Council members — to debate on reform of the Security Council. I hope that today's meeting will create a good opportunity to assess the ongoing efforts to improve the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council.

The world situation is very dynamic, sometimes even turbulent and worrisome. Security threats and challenges put at risk fundamental values and principles, as well as the very nature of effective international cooperation. Therefore, only a well-functioning and transparent Security Council can react to crisis situations in a timely manner in order to protect international peace and security.

Poland perceives the enhancement of the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work as well as its enlargement as the key issues of Security Council reform. Such reform should be built on the assumption that membership not only grants privileges but, first and foremost, increases responsibilities. We truly believe that all Security Council members, particularly the permanent ones, should defend and secure the fundamental values set out in the Charter. In no way should they undermine them.

Let me briefly underline some ideas that might be helpful in our discussion.

First, the Security Council should further enhance its cooperation with regional organizations, troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and the entire United Nations system.

Secondly, the enlargement of the Council should ensure the balanced representation of all regional groups. In this context we reaffirm our conviction that an additional seat for the Eastern European Group should also be envisaged, due to its substantial enlargement in recent years.

Thirdly, we support more active engagement of non-member States, especially countries directly affected by conflict situations, in the work of the Security Council, in particular during the process of preparing draft resolutions, presidential statement and press statements.

And fourthly, real improvement of the functioning of the Security Council should also include closer consultation with civil society.

Improving both the working methods and the composition of the Security Council is not only a question of enhancing the ability of the Council to function effectively. It is a question of its very credibility.

In conclusion, I would like to commend all countries which have contributed to developing and strengthening the current practices of the Council. My special appreciation goes to the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland — as well as to those of Japan and Slovakia, which successfully chaired the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list.

Let me draw some personal conclusions from today's debate. First of all, I want to thank all of the 45 colleagues who participated in the discussion, as well as the Secretary-General, who took part in the debate. A debate like today's offers both an opportunity and a challenge. It gives all of us — in particular non-members of the Council — an opportunity to state our views on the functioning of the Security Council. Our colleague from the United States used the term "consumer survey" (*S/PV.5968, p. 10*), which I think nicely sums up one of the purposes of the debate.

It also poses a challenge. The question of the working methods of the Security Council continues to be a sensitive matter, as shown by the fact that 14 years have passed since the first open debate on the issue, held in 1994. For that reason, I greatly appreciated the

tone of the statements we heard, which was sometimes frank but generally very constructive.

In my national statement, I indicated that, if concrete and achievable ideas emerged from this debate, I would it take it to be a success. I have in fact taken note of a good number of such ideas. I also noted that most delegations highlighted the key role of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and urged it to benefit from today's debate in order to come back to the Council as soon as possible with a specific outcome. Such an outcome would, in my view, likewise provide both an opportunity and a challenge for all of us. I hope that today's lengthy meeting will be the first step in that direction.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.